



# Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship"

Vol.2:no.3

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments..."

Spring 2003

## We have the man Shakespeare

*Edward de Vere and the lost letter of Wilton*

By David Roper

On the palatial estate at Wilton House, formerly the Wiltshire home of Sir Philip Sidney's sister, Lady Mary Herbert, tradition records that a shrine dedicated to "Shakespeare" was erected in memory of his visit to the House. The shrine still stands but the inability of Stratfordians to cope with Lady Mary's close connection to Shakespeare has ensured their silence on this matter, and a quick denouncement of all who dare mention it. As a recent commentator explained: "Shakespeare was the King's Man, not the Countess of Pembroke's... he was hardly in a position, either socially or legally to stay at Wilton House as an independent guest, as if for a country-house weekend."<sup>1</sup>

But remnants of a special link between Wilton and Shakespeare continue to remain alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This essay explores one such link: the tradition, confirmed by independent evidence, that in autumn 1603 "the man Shakespeare" was present at a performance of *As You Like It* before King James I. Curiously, however, the document which records this tradition has disappeared from public view since its first mention by William Cory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, extant documents confirm the plausibility of the tradition and show its uncomfortable implications for Stratfordian orthodoxy.

Cory<sup>2</sup>, a distinguished translator, lyric poet and antiquarian, is himself an interesting subject, but his discovery of a pos-

*(Continued on page 8)*

## Essay contest scores with students, teachers

*228 entries received from 28 States, Australia, Hong Kong and Malaysia*



*The Shakespeare Fellowship Essay Contest first place winners were Priscilla Mok in the Grades 9-10 division, and Gary Livacari in the Grades 11-12 division. In keeping with the broad scope of the contest, Mok's essay was based on the Stratfordian perspective, while Livacari wrote from an Oxfordian point of view.*

For many years, Oxfordians have dreamed of creating a Shakespeare essay contest for high school and college students. That dream finally became a reality with the first annual Shakespeare Fellowship Essay Contest, which ended January 15, 2003. The Essay contest, advertised through the Fellowship's website, awarded cash prizes for two divisions of essays by High School students, grades 9-10 (1<sup>st</sup> prize, \$250; 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, \$100; 3<sup>rd</sup> prize, \$50) and 11-12 (1<sup>st</sup> prize, \$500; 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, \$250; 3<sup>rd</sup> prize, \$100).

As reported in our last newsletter, the venture was an astounding success, sur-

*(Continued on page 23)*

## As You Like It

*Is Touchstone vs. William the first authorship story?*

By Alex McNeil

*"Come, Sweet Audrey. We Must Be Married, Or We Must Live in Bawdry."*

Shakespeare's *As You Like It* should be of particular interest to Oxfordians, if for no other reason than Act V, Scene 1—the encounter in the forest between the fool Touchstone and the local bumpkin William, Touchstone's rival for the hand of the country wench Audrey. The scene appears to be a deliberate implant; had it been omitted, the play would not suffer. One must ask, then, what motivated the playwright—a skilled dramatist at the

height of his career—to throw in such an apparently gratuitous scene? I will suggest that the key to the answer lies not in the two male suitors, but in Audrey. The analysis may also shed light on the play's date (or, as seems more likely, dates) of composition.

It should be noted here that the idea that this scene between Touchstone and William in *As You Like It* is actually an encounter between Oxford and Shakespeare is not original. It was explored as early as 1952 by Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn in

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Letters:

To the Editor:

My latest field report comes from a college bookstore, somewhere in Cambridge. On a grinning sixty feet of shelves devoted to Shakespeare there was not one publication that dealt with the authorship issue. Today the midden of books dealing with every follicle of the Stratfordian Fleece is staggering; and they keep on coming! Clippings from England certify that "Oxford" remains a "University"; both John and Joan Bull are still clueless; and that by having Alan Nelson do the bio on our Earl, the *DNB* is circling the wagons.

By why are hapless students being protected from the heresies of Looney, Ogburn, Whalen, or even Sobran? Surely there are copies of *Mein Kampf* and *Das Kapital*, Havelock Ellis and Kinsey, and possibly Dick Nixon's apologiae. When I was in college they were still not telling children (of all ages) about s-e-x. Does PEU (Prestigious Eastern University) feel its students will not know how to handle this challenge to its "scholarship"? What has become of the Gospel of Inquiry?

We probed rigorously into why our scout was unable to find "evidence of dangerous dissent." Apparently her distress had been too difficult to conceal; the managing gorgon volunteered assistance. It was probably a mistake to ask whether there were any books about the "real playwright". The answer was a classic; "It's not been proved!"

How, then, about the bookstores in your college towns? Perhaps a poll would be useful. Or the Fellowship could provide bibliographies to these stores and issue framed Certificates of Approval to reward any signs of academic courage.

Ignoto  
(name withheld by request)  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
10 March 2003

To the Editor:

I was most gratified to see the use of work first published in *Oxford's Revenge* by Stephanie Caruana and me in 1989. There are a few additional things that should be noted, however, about this publication and the sketch on the title page.

The image of the sketch for the cover of

*Arte of Navigation* was found in the 1968 reprint of *Arte* by De Capo Press. However, they did not have anything to say about who that missing fourth figure might be. That take on the matter is the sort of thing that only Oxfordians—already attuned to Edward de Vere's story as an invisible man—could conceive of.

Also, there are several important observations that should be added to what you have already noted in the caption under the side-by-side reproductions of the sketch and the published cover. It's not just the "plummed bonnet" worn by the fourth figure in the sketch that's of interest, but also the fact that he wears any headgear at all in the presence of the Queen! Note that the other three—Walsingham, Burghley and Leicester—are bareheaded.

Secondly, special note should be made of the Latin inscription surrounding the title itself (above the image). Roger Stritmatter had once pointed out to me—I forget when—that this inscription reads, "More things are unseen than open."

How apt! This could just as well become the motto for all of us trying to unravel the mysteries of the Elizabethan era.

Elisabeth Sears  
Killington, Vermont  
20 March 2003



Title page from John Dee's 1577 *Arte of Navigation*. The Latin inscription around the title reads: "More things are unseen than open."

### Shakespeare Matters

Published quarterly by the  
The Shakespeare Fellowship

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The Shakespeare Fellowship

Subscriptions to *Shakespeare Matters* are \$40 per year (\$20 for online issues only). Family or institution subscriptions are \$60 per year. Patrons of the Fellowship are \$75 and up. Send subscription requests to:

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship is to promote public awareness and acceptance of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), and further to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication into all aspects of Shakespeare studies, and also into the history and culture of the Elizabethan era.

The Society was founded and incorporated in 2001 in the State of Massachusetts and is chartered under the membership corporation laws of that state. It is a recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit (Fed ID 04-3578550).

Dues, grants and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*Shakespeare Matters* welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Fellowship as a literary and educational organization.

## Nominating Committee names slate

The bylaws adopted by the membership of the Shakespeare Fellowship at the 2002 general meeting charge the nominating committee with producing a slate of nominees to fill all openings.

There are four openings for the upcoming Fall 2003 elections: the post of president (elected each year) and three trustees (staggered 3-year terms). This year's nominating committee (Donald Greenwood, Sarah Smith, Chuck Berney) has announced a slate of Alex McNeil (president) and Roger Stritmatter, Steven Aucella and Earl Showerman (trustees).

Alex McNeil is currently treasurer of the Fellowship. Stritmatter and Aucella are currently completing 2-year terms as trustees and are running for 3-year terms. Earl Showerman is a physician and computer expert living in Jacksonville OR, running for his first term on the board.

Candidates for open posts can also be nominated by the membership by obtaining the consent of the prospective candidate and submitting a petition signed by 10 members in good standing. For further information contact Chuck Berney at [cvberney@rcn.com](mailto:cvberney@rcn.com) or at 617-926-4552.

### Correction

In our article in the Winter 2003 issue about the "Picturing Shakespeare" conference in Toronto we reported on the talk given there by Prof. Alexander Leggatt. In this report we stated that Prof. Leggatt's "take" on the Touchstone-William encounter in Act V, scene 1 of *As You Like It* was that William (who he sees as the author Shakespeare) "defeated" Touchstone.

However, we have since learned that Prof. Leggatt's exact words in his talk were "Touchstone's defeat of William." Our notes for the talk had "by William," which had seemed to us an extreme reading of the scene, but, we thought, what Leggatt had said.

However, what we have learned since then is, we think, equally extreme. For Prof. Leggatt's reading of this scene is that William represents Shakespeare, and Touchstone represents the company clown that playwrights cannot control. Leggatt cites Hamlet in this regard, quoting the Prince's words to the players, "Let your clowns speak no more than is set down for them."

## From the Editor

### As We Like It

Sometimes while putting together the newsletter events take on a life of their own. That's the way it was as we prepared this issue. The story that kept coming up was *As You Like It*, especially the scene featuring Touchstone, Audrey, and the country fellow William.

For those not familiar with it, read Alex McNeil's article beginning on page one for an interesting exposition of the scene and its possible meanings.

And we also had on hand David Roper's wonderful article about "The man Shakespeare" possibly being at Wilton House in the fall of 1603 for a production of, yes, *As You Like It*—a perfect companion piece for McNeil's article. And since some of us have wondered in the past whether the "man Shakespeare" in this story referred to Oxford or—possibly—to William of Stratford, we can only wonder how an audience including both the real Shakespeare and possibly his stand-in William, plus Lady Pembroke, her sons and King James might have responded to the Touchstone-William encounter.

But this is also where things get interesting in our contemporary authorship story, since we had recently encountered analysis of this scene last fall while covering the "Picturing Shakespeare" Conference in Toronto...from Stratfordians. For our Winter 2003 issue report on the conference we had reviewed Prof. Jonathan Bate's take on the scene, in which William is Shakespeare's

"younger self" (though this example didn't make it into the published article) and also Prof. Alexander Leggatt's take on the scene (see the Correction box elsewhere on this page), in which William is also the playwright Shakespeare, but Touchstone represents an acting company's clown whom the playwright cannot control.

That both these scholars felt it necessary to address this scene seems to indicate their awareness of Oxfordian interpretations and the need to respond to the notion that the scene depicts a misunderstood author (Touchstone) telling an upstart William (whoever he may be) that Audrey (whoever she is) is NOT his, and he'd better watch his step in trying to lay claim to her.

Yet what is most interesting here is what the Bate and Leggatt interpretations tell us about the state of the authorship debate. For what is really going on here, it seems to us, is that both Bate and Leggatt are conceding a major debating point to the Oxfordians. Consider that in both cases their exposition of Act V, scene 1 is that Shakespeare is depicting himself on the stage and commenting on/satirizing his life. We couldn't agree more. This is progress, and we like it.

Now, all we need do is move on to Hamlet, the theatre-loving prince, and ask ourselves, "Could this too be Shakespeare?" And next, "Is Shakespeare everywhere in the plays?" What a breakthrough.

## John Louthier, 1924 - 2003

It was with great sadness that we learned recently of the passing of John Louthier, a former Board member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, an active Oxfordian and a friend to many of us. John made some significant contributions to our cause in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at a time when the issue was blossoming on the public scene as a result of the Moot Court Debate in Washington DC in 1987, the *Frontline* show in 1989, and the *Atlantic Monthly* cover story in 1991.

An Oxfordian since the 1960s, Louthier was a career journalist who worked for the Mutual Network, and covered Washington DC politics, including the LBJ White House; so he knew about the press and how to tell a story. He played an important role in getting Charles Burford (a collateral descendant of the de Vere line) traveling

around the country in the early 1990s in what was known as the "Burford Tour." The Burford Tour lectures drew large audiences and much press coverage, all of which helped the SOS grow dramatically in the early 90s and spread public awareness of the authorship debate.

In more recent years Louthier had been working on an Oxfordian encyclopedia/directory that combined basic Elizabethan history and literature with the special insights gained through the authorship debate (i.e. knowing who Shakespeare was). A number of Oxfordians around the country had been enlisted to help out, and we hope the enterprise can be continued in some manner.

He is survived by his wife Pat, daughter Criste, two grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

## The Shakespeare Concert

A concert consisting largely of compositions based on the works of Shakespeare was presented Sunday, 23 February at Temple Emeth in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. The program was arranged by Joseph Summer, and the bulk of it was devoted to performances of his compositions, settings of texts from the plays and the sonnets, including "With Mirth in Funeral" (Claudius's speech from Act I of *Hamlet*), "Too Too Solid Flesh," "What a Piece of Work is Man," "To Be Or Not To Be," "Gallop Apace" (from Act 3 of *Romeo and Juliet*), "Full Fathom Five" (from Act 1 of *The Tempest*), and Sonnets 8 and 132. These works, composed in a modern style, were performed by a superb group of musicians, including Maria Ferrante (soprano), Ja-Naé Duane (mezzo-soprano), Alan Schneider (tenor), Elem Eley (baritone), Miroslav Sekera (pianist) and John McGinn (pianist and music director). Two of the numbers included accompaniment by French horn, ably carried out by Barbara

Shepherd. The music varied in mood and compositional technique from piece to piece, but was always beautifully expressive and deeply emotional.

Joseph Summer is a full-time composer who has written operas based on Boccaccio's *Decameron* as well as the works mentioned above. He became an Oxfordian in 1991, and so refers to the Shakespearean works as the "Oxford Songs." The program for the Temple Emeth concert included the following paragraph:

Joseph Summer's settings of scenes from Shakespeare's plays and the sonnets are contained in five books . . . which Summer has labeled The Oxford Songs; labeled thus because Summer subscribes to the unorthodox opinion that Shakespeare is the pseudonym of Edward de Vere, the 17<sup>th</sup> earl of Oxford. The doubts regarding Shakespeare's ipseity have a long history. At one time those who doubted the Man from Stratford as the author flirted with the idea of Bacon. Mark Twain wrote "I only

believed Bacon wrote Shakespeare, whereas I knew Shakespeare didn't" in the article "Is Shakespeare Dead?" In this unpopular essay, Twain assailed the orthodox authorship view (known as the Stratfordian), writing "since the Stratford Shakespeare couldn't have written the Works, we infer that somebody did. Who was it then?" The view that it was Oxford wasn't hypothesized until several years after Twain, first in 1920 by J. Thomas Looney. Summer shares his "Looney" belief that the Stratfordian Shakespeare is not the author of our language's greatest works with many predecessors, including Henry James, Walt Whitman, and Ralph Waldo Emerson; with contemporary figures such as noted Shakespearean actors Kenneth Branagh and Derek Jacobi; and even Mark Rylance, the artistic director of the Globe.

In some introductory remarks, the rabbi of the temple pointed out that "Emeth" is the Hebrew word for "Truth." He did not go on to make the connection with de Vere's family name, but it is there.

## Authorship mock trial in Chicago

Public debates on the Shakespeare authorship question continue to draw large audiences.

Nearly a thousand people—probably a record number—heard the arguments for both sides in a mock appeal court before three federal district court judges in Chicago, and paid for the privilege to do so. No surprise, it was a 2-1 decision for the Stratford man that appeared to be foreordained, but Edward de Vere, the seventeenth earl of Oxford, once again had his day in court.

If the federal district judges' decision last November could be appealed to knowledgeable justices on the Supreme Court of the United States, sitting and deceased, Oxford might just win the appeal. At least four justices and perhaps six on the nation's highest court have seen great merit in the case for Oxford.

In Chicago, arguing for Oxford were an assistant U.S. attorney and a Northwestern Law School professor, neither known to have had an interest in Oxford as the author. In the view of Bill Farina, co-founder and director of the Chicago Oxford Soci-

ety, and other society members, the two lawyers were less than enthusiastic about their client and were not well prepared. They were unable to answer the panel's basic questions about Oxford. For example, a judge asked one of Oxford's lawyers whether Oxford was well-traveled. The lawyer said he did not know. Each lawyer had ten minutes and then they were quizzed by the judges.

None of the participants contacted Oxfordians. When he heard about the event, Farina, a law school graduate, offered to provide an amicus brief or any assistance, but his offers were ignored or rejected.

After a lunch break, the three judges returned with lengthy opinions that appeared to be typed—opinions that included comments on matters not even raised in the moot court arguments. The dissenter in the 2-1 decision straddled the issue. She found merit in the anti-Stratfordian argument but worried about the plays that appeared after 1604 when Oxford died. She said she viewed it as an open question, yet to be resolved.

The editor of the program magazine of

the Chicago Shakespeare Theater was somewhat more positive. She wrote a brief report that referred to the "conventional judgment" for the Stratford man, noted that the issue has been a "top story" in major media and mentioned the Shakespeare Oxford Society. Her conclusion, however, which might also be considered foreordained, was "little new enlightenment" and "better stick to the plays."

The big turnout for the event and the sell-out, paying audience of 600 at the Smithsonian debate earlier last year, testify to the continuing interest in the authorship question. The turnout in Chicago probably exceeded by a bit that of the 1987 moot court before three justices of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington. Regardless of the outcome, at least these large audiences hear that there is an issue that engages the interest of lawyers and judges. Members of the Chicago Oxford Society were disappointed and dismayed by the conduct of the mock appeal court, but the society did get several new members who had picked up brochures in the lobby.

—RFW

## Twenty speakers already on board for 2nd Annual Fellowship Conference

The Shakespeare Fellowship's 2nd Annual Conference in Carmel, California, this October 9th to 12th has already booked 20 speakers, just about filling all available slots for presentations. Anyone interested in speaking this fall should contact either Lynne Kositsky ([kositsky@can.net](mailto:kositsky@can.net)) or Roger Stritmatter ([stritmatter24@hotmail.com](mailto:stritmatter24@hotmail.com)) soon. For general information about the conference contact Fellowship President Chuck Berney at [cvberney@rcn.com](mailto:cvberney@rcn.com) or by phone at 617-926-4552.

In addition to the slate of papers, conference attendees will be seeing three Shakespeare plays over the four-day schedule: *Henry VI, Parts I and II*, and *Taming of the Shrew*. Present plans call for seeing *Shrew* on Friday evening and both parts of *Henry VI* on Saturday. Tickets for all three plays are included in the conference registration fee of \$195.00, which also includes four meals. There is an economy package avail-

able, which is \$95.00 for all papers and the three plays (no meals), and a papers only rate of \$15.00 per day or \$50.00 for all four days.

An additional conference event scheduled for Monday morning (Columbus Day) is a reading of Alan Navarre's new play *The Crown Signature*.

Speakers already set for Carmel include Dr. Michael Brame and Dr. Galina Popova (authors, *Shakespeare's Fingerprints*, reviewed on page 24 in this issue), Dr. Daniel Wright, Dr. Roger Stritmatter, Lynne Kositsky, Richard Whalen, Richard Desper, Charles Boyle, William Boyle, Mark Anderson, Mark Alexander, John Shahan, Elisabeth Sears, Eric Altshuler, Sarah Smith (whose authorship novel *Chasing Shakespeares* will be available in June), Michael Dunn, Hank Whittemore, Barbara Burris, Ron Halstead, Paul Altrocchi, Dr. Kevin Simpson and Dr. Ren Draya.

## 400th anniversary of Elizabeth's death celebrated at the Folger

It was 400 years ago that the Elizabethan age came to an end with the death of Elizabeth on March 25th, 1603 (followed just a year later by the death of Shakespeare on June 24th, 1604). Since everyone loves nice, neat and tidy anniversary dates, this 400th anniversary has been receiving some attention in academic and cultural circles around the US and UK (and, we hope, just as Shakespeare's 1604 death will next year).

One of the more interesting commemorations is taking place at the Folger Shakespeare Library, where an extensive exhibit ("Elizabeth I, Then and Now") will run through August 2nd. A feature article in the *Washington Post* on April 1st described the exhibition as having been "years in the making." It includes numerous artifacts and documents relating to Elizabeth, an audio commentary for visitors and a printed catalogue.

The Shakespeare connection to all this is rather brief. The article states that, "for all the fascination of Shakespeare's poetic kings and queens, the reality of Elizabeth may be even more intriguing." Well, we might add, only if Shakespeare is not someone close to Elizabeth. The article also notes that when



Courtesy, Folger Shakespeare Library

*The Sieve portrait of Elizabeth. The sieve symbolizes virginity, though the Washington Post story refers to her "supposed virginity."*

Shakespeare is mentioned occasionally, it is "to make clear the mores and prejudices within which Elizabeth operated," but at least Elizabeth did fare better than monarchs in any of Shakespeare's history plays.

## De Vere Society invites Fellowship members to 2004 Conference

Brian Hicks, Chairman of The De Vere Society in Great Britain, has written us to extend a warm invitation to fellow Oxfordians in the Shakespeare Fellowship to join the De Vere Society in Cambridge, London, in July 2004 in celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of England's greatest poet, Edward de Vere.

Whatever other events mark this momentous occasion, Hicks writes, it does seem right and proper that he is honored in his own country and where could be more appropriate than the college where he was a student.

For those who would be interested in presenting a paper at the conference or simply wish to attend please respond by e-mail only for further details [brian.hicks@ntlworld.com](mailto:brian.hicks@ntlworld.com).

## Shakespearean Authorship Trust Conference in London

In a notice recently received from Charles Beauclerk in London we learn that there will be a new authorship conference for Oxfordians to add to their busy schedules. Beauclerk writes that The Shakespearean Authorship Trust (SAT), under the chairmanship of Mark Rylance, will be holding its first conference on June 14th and 15th, 2003, at the Globe Theatre in London. The cost is £95. Since there will be only 70 places available interested parties should act soon to secure a place.

Contact Jasmine Lawrence at [jasmine@shakespearesglobe.com](mailto:jasmine@shakespearesglobe.com) for further details.

## Shakespeare Oxford Society Conference in NYC, Oct. 23-26, 2003

The 27th Annual Conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society will be held in New York City this October (23rd to 26th). The theme for this conference is publishing and performance, topics fitting to the NYC venue and two of its leading industries. Contact Gerit Quealy at 212-678-0006 (email: [MissGQ@aol.com](mailto:MissGQ@aol.com)) for further information.

# Every word in Shakespeare

## *Textual signatures by the true author*

By R. Thomas Hunter, Ph.D.

It is possible to link Edward de Vere's penchant for wordplay in his poetry with Shakespeare's similar practice and to identify passages in the poems and plays in which Shakespeare, more accurately represented as "Shake-speare," uses wordplay to identify himself as Edward de Vere and provide textual signatures by the true author of his work.

In poems written under his own name, Edward de Vere demonstrated a passion for wordplay. A familiar example is his echo poem in which the poet sees a young lady at the seashore, sighing and weeping, then breaking into song, each line of which the echo answers. In one section, the wordplay involves the poet's name:

Oh heavens! who was the first that bred in  
me this fever? Vere.  
Who was the first that gave the wound  
whose fear I wear for ever? Vere.  
What tyrant, Cupid, to my harm usurps  
thy golden quiver? Vere.  
What wight first caught this heart and can  
from bondage it deliver? Vere.

This is not great poetry. It is the poetry of a young poet learning his art and learning to work with its raw materials, words. Of importance here is the youth's fascination and focus on his name, especially the equivalence he asserts between it and the word "ever." We shall see this again in Shakespeare.

The wordplay continues in Shakespeare's poems and plays with words such as "true," the root of de Vere (ver=truth) and "will," as in Will Shakespeare, both of which relate intimately to the poet's identity. It continues likewise for words such as "ever" and "every," which play upon his name, E(dward) Ver(e), as in the echo poem.

Sonnet 76 provides an oft-quoted example set against the device of the poet's lament concerning a lack of variation or change or even creativity in his poetry:

Why write I still all one, ever the same,  
And keep invention in a noted weed,  
That every word doth almost tell my name,  
Showing their birth and where they did  
proceed?

This passage is clearly concerned with Shakespeare's central and oft-repeated theme of identity. The poet's use of "ever" and "every" here and the echo effect of that use recall the echo poem and the connection it makes between "ever" and "Vere." If so, it is word-play on the poet's biographical name of the boldest and most relevant sort. If so, these lines then speak as much as possible to the centrality of Shakespeare's own identity to his literature, for how could they do more to develop the issue of identity than to identify the real-life name behind the pen-name?

Thematically, the statement made by these lines, framed as it is within a question, of Shakespeare's identity as Edward de Vere falls within the general theme of Sonnet 76, the constancy of the truth of his love, for the truth of his identity cannot be separated from the truth he expresses as a poet: "Why write I still all one, ever the same." "I" and "ever"/E. Ver are "one" and "the same." That is the poet's truth, "cloaked," as it is "in an ambiguous literary narrative,"<sup>1</sup> a conscious, potentially complex tactic, even to the extent that, as the poet says, "every word doth almost tell my name." The involvement of "truth," of course, further deepens the word-play on the poet's name. It is well known how conscious de Vere was that "truth" provided the very root of his name, as demonstrated in his family's motto, "Vero Nihil Verius," Nothing Truer than Truth. And even further, truth's constancy as expressed in "ever the same" (l. 5) has been widely recognized as the English equivalent of Queen Elizabeth's motto, "Semper eadem," providing ever more depth to the wordplay not to mention boundless implication.

At this point, the question must be asked, "Can the juxtaposition of all of these specific elements so as to yield a coherent and consistent meaning on several levels be accidental?" It hardly seems so. It can become even more convincing to see how the poet creates these meanings.

The poet in the second identifying line "that every word doth almost tell my name" achieves identity with the name de Vere in two ways. First, the line remarkably accomplishes Shakespeare's meaning and purpose by moving not in the usual direc-

tion from literal to figurative but in the opposite direction from the figurative to the literal. It is a touch of genius and a masterful example of Elizabethan indirection, because "every" as a word, and as an inexact literal statement of the poet's name "E. Ver," does, as the poet writes, "almost" tell what that name is. Not only does the poet tell us who he is, he tells us in the very next line that all of his literature (his "every" word) is all about his identity and his life: "showing their birth and where they did proceed." I can scarcely think of a life that could have been more defined by birth than that of the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford—nor, for that matter, a life more giving of its own autobiographical detail to poetic and dramatic literature.

Secondly, the word "every" echoes the word "ever" just two lines before and in the repetition not only unifies these four lines and their central thought and purpose but also draws attention to itself.

Even the metrical dynamics of the poem bear witness to this intent. Notice that reading the line "Why write I still all one, ever the same" in its normal sense with "ever" as an adverb interrupts the strong iambic pentameter of the poem, heavy beats falling upon "one" and then immediately upon the first syllable of "ever." In fact, the iambic rhythm of the preceding lines is so strong that the reader tends to maintain it through the word "ever," so that the heavy beat falls upon the second syllable "ver," which is, of course, the heart of Edward de Vere's name. Try reading the whole poem yourself, especially out loud, and see how momentum carries you through the word "ever" to pronounce it with emphasis upon exactly the part of the word which I believe Shakespeare wanted emphasized and perhaps to which he wanted to direct attention.

In the sonnets, the poet seems quite obviously to understand the obscurity that he faces and the death of his name. It is for him a central issue, as in Sonnet 81 in which the poet states, "I, once gone, to all the world must die," while "Your monument shall be my gentle verse." For Shakespeare, literature—the poem—confers immortality upon its subjects. Of course, the poet becomes a subject of the

sonnets and therefore becomes immortal, too, albeit without a name. I don't think for a moment that this subtlety was lost on Shakespeare and am willing to believe that it was well within his intent.

Likewise in the plays. In *Hamlet*, widely agreed to be his most autobiographical play, Shakespeare came closest to stating explicitly that he is Edward de Vere in a prime example of Elizabethan oblique communication as defined by Roger Stritmatter.<sup>2</sup> Others have noticed this apparent textual signature, but I don't believe anyone has shown how English grammar and the logic of the text demonstrate how Shakespeare used Hamlet's "cursed spite" speech to announce his real-world identity and to suggest the drama in which he personally found himself.

After having just heard the ghost's tale of betrayal and against the background of the ghost's voice tolling the word, "Swear," Hamlet and Horatio reach a certain resolve never to betray Hamlet's cause or confidence. It is in that setting at the very end of Act One that Hamlet says, "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!"

The statement is Hamlet's realization of his essential tragic circumstance, that he is the focus of fateful forces far beyond his human control, such as his birth or the timing of it. Even more, it is a realization that he must be the one to set these forces right. This brief but potent statement provides the force which propels Hamlet and the play to their tragic end and as such carries a power all out of proportion to the economy of its words.

But it is even more. The statement, "That ever I was born," struck me, even as a pre-Oxfordian reader, as being at least slightly out of joint. It seemed odd. It seemed to bring inordinate attention to the word "ever." The poet could have said it several ways without losing the rhythm or the sense, such as those listed here (see box) using the same words and in a more grammatically effective way if "ever" is, as it is usually taken, an adverb. Why did he choose this word order?

The answer appears to be that with the word order used, the statement also says, "I was born E. Ver." The poetry creates that meaning. This brief yet powerful speech which propels both reader and characters

through the rest of the tragedy becomes at the same time the true author's signature, a statement which identifies the author whose pen-name was Shake-speare and suggests personal tragic conflict similar to Hamlet's.

This is how the poet achieves what I believe to be one of literature's greatest examples of purposeful and pointed ambiguity: he positions the word "ever," which, as we have seen, he uses to represent his real world name, E. Vere, to function grammatically as an adverb and as an appositive at the same time.

### Comparisons: "ever" as an adverb

*Which of the following did Shakespeare choose to have Hamlet say ... and why?*

*"The time is out of joint: O, cursed spite, ..."*

- A) *"that I ever was born to set it right!"*
- B) *"that ever was I born to set it right!"*
- C) *"that ever I was born to set it right!"*
- D) *"that I was ever born to set it right!"*

The normal sense of the lines, the sense with which audiences have ever, I suppose, been satisfied, is the sense achieved by the word "ever" acting as an adverb: "that I was ever born to set it right." You can see how, in explaining the sense of the sentence, it helps to change the position of the word "ever" to show its meaning in modifying the verb "was born." As written in the play, the word is clearly out of place in terms of normal usage. But notice. Placing the word "ever" where he does focuses the reader upon the word. It becomes much more important there, has more impact. It in fact becomes the central word of the sentence.

It may be enough, of course, for the poet to use this word order to express most dramatically Hamlet's fated dilemma. But if that is all he wished to do, he could have written, "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite, / That ever was I born to set it right!" Either of these two word orders—"that I was ever born" or "that ever was I born"—would have been appropriate, even ex-

pected, for the role of the word "ever" as an adverb.

But Shakespeare didn't do that. Shakespeare chose a third word order in which the word "ever" stands next to "I" (not "was"), so as to be separated from "was": "That ever I was born to set it right." In this way, "ever" still retains its function as an adverb, because our English-reading minds can stretch across the order of the words to accommodate the expected, apparent meaning of the sentence. But in terms of its grammatical operation—and ultimately its meaning—the new word order makes the word "ever" act also as an appositive. In fact, in terms of word order, it becomes primarily an appositive as a name, E. Ver. Since an adverb can't be in apposition, the poet forces you to make the word a noun—a name. If read as E. Ver in the tradition of the word-play in which Edward de Vere delighted as a young poet and in which Shakespeare delighted as a mature poet and playwright, as an appositive to the subject "I," the statement becomes, "I was born E. Ver" or Edward Vere or Edward de Vere.

The word order which Shakespeare does use, the least normal order but creating the greatest dramatic effect, also creates the most layered meaning, which in turn identifies the man who was Shakespeare.

It is one of the most significant passages in all of Shakespeare, a virtuoso accomplishment, achieving genius in its simplicity. Somehow we would expect nothing less from the poet Shakespeare or from the man Edward de Vere, who are identified by the language of *Hamlet* as one and the same.

Even beyond knowing Shakespeare's identity, Hamlet's lines raise further questions, for now we need to know what "The time is out of joint" meant in personal terms for de Vere and exactly what he was born to set right, just as we need to know why it was so important for the poet to incorporate Queen Elizabeth's motto into Sonnet 76.

It should be acknowledged that some might contend that a saying such as "that ever I was born" could have been common enough and that there was nothing special to it. That thought occurred to me when independent researcher Barbara Burris directed my attention to the very same

*(Continued on page 32)*

*Man Shakespeare* (continued from page 1) sibly critical document in the Shakespeare authorship controversy magnifies his importance to posterity. William Cory was a Renaissance man of Victorian England. Although made assistant master of Greek at Eton in 1845, he remained active as a researcher and scholar in his vernacular culture, recording his researches in a journal published shortly after his death. In 1860, the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, recommended him to Queen Victoria for the position of Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. Except for Prince Albert's preference for Kingsley, this appointment would have confirmed him in the role of an established historian. In the summer of 1865, while on vacation from Eton, Cory was invited by Lady Elizabeth Herbert, Baroness of Lea, to spend a few weeks tutoring her son, the future 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Pembroke, at their home in Wilton House. This expansive Wilton estate had once belonged to Sir Philip Sidney's sister, Lady Mary Herbert. Any study of the Shakespeare mystery reveals Lady Herbert as a critical figure. She has documented connections to the de Veres of Castle Hedingham and to the Shakespeare First Folio of 1623, which was dedicated to her two sons. These two sons, William and Philip, had been affianced to Bridget and Susan de Vere, younger daughters of the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. But the interference of Lord Burghley in 1597 resulted in a prohibitively generous dowry being demanded for the hand of his granddaughter, Bridget, and her marriage to William was reluctantly called off. The wedding between Philip and Susan in 1605 did, however, proceed; by then, Burghley had been seven years in his grave.

In 1623, the brothers were celebrated as "The most noble and Incomparable Paire of Brethren" to whom the collected plays of the Folio were dedicated, apparently by Ben Jonson writing under the public fiction of Heminges and Condell as authors of the dedication. Unfortunately, Wilton House did not survive long afterwards. In 1647 a disastrous fire destroyed most of the house. It was later rebuilt by the architect Inigo Jones, but only the east and south fronts now remain; the north and west fronts were extensively altered by James Wyatt between 1801 and 1814, "although the 'Wolsey Tower' is a remnant of the 16<sup>th</sup> century building with the clock tower added

at a later date."<sup>3</sup> It was to this Wilton House that Cory came in the summer of 1865.

In her biography of William Cory, Faith Compton Mackenzie explains her relationship to him. "He was my mother's uncle, my father's comrade in scholarship . . . I know that he was a specially loved guest in my family."<sup>4</sup> This relationship is impor-



William Cory

tant, because it means she had full access to the family papers when researching the life of her great-uncle. As she says, "I have depended as much as possible on other sources, so far un-  
t o u c h e d ,  
though it has been difficult to avoid an occasional quotation."<sup>5</sup> [A reference to Lord Esher's earlier biography of Cory, and to the Letters and Journals published by Francis Warre-Cornish.] Her commentary below, upon the "lost" letter of Wilton, and her use of quotation marks are therefore significant to the study of Shakespeare as a person:

An interesting entry in his diary when he was staying at Wilton House, Salisbury, tells how Lady Pembroke showed him a letter from her forerunner to her son, urging him to bring the King (James I) from Salisbury to see *As You Like It*. "We have the man Shakespeare here," she added laconically.

That would have been an agreeable occasion. The excellent play, the author present, and the King lured from Salisbury. To commemorate it a temple was built at Wilton, and known as "Shakespeare's House".<sup>6</sup>

The edited version of *Extracts from the Letters and Journals of William Cory*, published five years after his death, reaffirms Mackenzie's accuracy:

Aug. 5. The house (Lady Herbert said) is full of interest: above us is Wolsey's room; we have a letter, never printed, from Lady Pembroke to her son, telling him to bring James I from Salisbury to see *As You*

*Like It*; 'we have the man Shakespeare with us.' She wanted to cajole the king in Raleigh's behalf—he came.<sup>7</sup>

This conversation must have occurred close to the Wolsey tower, a remnant of the original abbey. Lady Elizabeth's talented husband, Sidney Herbert, twice appointed as Secretary of State for War, and who was the power behind sending Florence Nightingale to the Crimea, died in 1861. Wilton House had been rented to them both by Sidney's half-brother, Robert, the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Pembroke, who lived abroad. But nine months after the death of Sidney, Robert also died, leaving Lady Elizabeth's 12-year-old son, George, to inherit the Pembroke title. Lady Herbert therefore had complete run of the House from that time, with unhindered access to all its treasures and heirlooms. Consequently, during conversation with William Cory upon his favourite subjects of history and lyrical poetry, it would have been a natural response for Lady Herbert to have confided in her gifted guest the letter "never printed," which confirmed Shakespeare's presence at Wilton. The unsubstantiated claim, made much later, that she invented the letter, or that Cory fabricated the entry in his journal, is to accuse either one, or both, with deception, but to no obvious purpose.

During his fortnight spent at Wilton, Cory's many perambulations around the grounds would have taken him to the temple, and through natural inquisitiveness he would have learned of its reputation. A visiting feature writer, who was received at Wilton House some years after Cory, described both the temple and its approach:

Straight from the terrace leads a pretty walk, between trees of infinite shades of delicate green; to its right is the great green-house; and to the left the gardens slope gently to the little river.

At the end of the shady walk is a little building which has been christened by Wilton . . . Shakespeare's House. For there is a story, in no way improbable, that once upon a time Shakespeare and his actors "gave a play" at Wilton House—before what a company one may imagine!

In memory of this a little temple has been built: classic as to its pillars, feudal as to the devices of arms above, with portrait busts, and an inscription on the wall from



the wonderful lines in *Macbeth*—

*Life's but a walking shadow; a poor  
player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon  
the stage,  
And then is heard no more: . . .*

Close to Shakespeare's House passes one of the three little rivers which pass through the park—not, as it might appropriately have been, the Avon, but the less romantic Nadder. An Avon is, however, the chief of the three streams, the other two being its tributaries; it is . . . a pleasant stream—the Upper Avon it is called—which comes through the downs of South Wiltshire, and goes past Salisbury into Hampshire.<sup>8</sup>

Although Cory's journal indicates that he maintained a poet's interest in the plays of Shakespeare—for he writes informatively about many that he had read or seen, while remaining sometimes critical of their dramatic content—the selected *Extracts* offer no more information upon the subject matter of the letter; nor has his biographer seen any further reason to pursue this subject. Shakespeare scholars such as Sir Sidney Lee, who vehemently denied the authenticity of the tradition because the "tenor" of the letter, "stamps it, if it exists, as an ignorant invention," or the more prudent E.K Chambers, for whom "the apparent familiarity with which Shakespeare seems to have been referred to, is noteworthy."<sup>9</sup> indicates the importance it has to the authorship question.

The temple is still situated in Lord Pembroke's garden, close to the banks of the river Nadder, but being on private land it is not referred to in any of the contemporary guides to the House.

In 1897, the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery was listed among those who had subscribed to the publication of Cory's Journal, yet Wilton House remains strangely subdued about this particular connection with Shakespeare. The "letter, never printed," from Lady Pembroke to her son, is to this day unprinted. Possibly it was lost or inadvertently destroyed. But whatever reason the family had for keeping the letter secret in the past, Lady Herbert's chance conversation with William Cory, and the interest that followed publication of what he had been shown has

done nothing to change this. Currently, the House remains noncommittal about the letter,<sup>10</sup> thereby allowing Stratfordians the freedom to declare it lost, or even nonexistent. Unfortunately, yet perhaps understandably, the English aristocracy has a reputation for closing its doors to outside inquirers if the subject matter involves some controversial issue affecting its ancestry. Consequently, what is maintained publicly need not always be what is said privately.

Wilton House is, nevertheless, proud of its association with the man recognized by orthodox scholarship as Shakespeare. As visitors enter the Front Hall they are immediately confronted by Peter Scheemakers' statue of Shakespeare, designed by William Kent, similar to the one in Westminster Abbey. *The Introduction to the House*, free to visitors, is pleased to point out that it was cast for the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl in 1743 because of the connection between the poet's collected works and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Earls to whom the published editions were dedicated. Both men, the Guide explains, had become Chancellors of Oxford University and patrons of the arts. *The Introduction* then adopts an air of coyness as it distances itself from any further involvement with Shakespeare, concluding with the remark that

There is a tradition, never proven, that Shakespeare came here and acted one of his plays in the courtyard.

The more extensive booklet, *Wilton House*, on sale to visitors, states unequivocally that Shakespeare visited the House, but leaves the reason for his visit open to conjecture.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Wilton House was a centre of patronage for the arts, visited by many of the most famous literary figures, such as Sir Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, Aubrey and, in particular William Shakespeare. (p.5) . . . It is reputed that Shakespeare and his players first performed *As You Like It* and perhaps *Twelfth Night* at Wilton House. (p.9).

By definition, a tradition is an opinion or belief handed down from ancestors to posterity. This "tradition" must therefore have been derived from information dating back to the time of Lady Mary Pembroke. The Guide's mention of "the court-

yard" also distinguishes it from the contents of "the letter," which contains no reference to the precise performance location of *As You Like It*. County historian Arthur Mee also mentions this tradition, but offers a different location for the play's performance, one more in line with the onset of winter.

Here according to tradition, Shakespeare himself with his troupe played *As You Like It* for the first time before James the First in the great hall, . . .<sup>11</sup>

It therefore appears there was originally more than one mention of Shakespeare having been at Wilton House in the fall of 1603. A further reference, extant in the public domain, can be found in the Chamber Accounts record for December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1603.

John Heminges, one of his Majesty's players . . . for the pains and expenses of himself and the rest of the company in coming from Mortlake in the county of Surrey unto the court aforesaid and there presenting before his Majesty one play. £30.<sup>12</sup>

James I had been crowned King of England by Archbishop Whitgift on 25<sup>th</sup> July, but a particularly virulent outbreak of the plague in London forced the court to vacate the city. In their bid to escape infection, James and his courtiers visited the counties of Berkshire (Windsor), Surrey (Hampton Court), Oxfordshire (Woodstock), Hampshire (Winchester), Wiltshire (Wilton), and Hampshire again (Isle of Wight), before returning to Wiltshire (Salisbury). "He [Pembroke] entertained the king at Wilton on 29-30 Aug. 1603 (Nichols, *Progresses*, i. 254)."<sup>13</sup> Ian Wilson, in his *Evidence for Shakespeare*, confirms that "James' Court . . . stayed at Wilton between 24 October and 12 December. . . [and] that Shakespeare's company, almost inevitably with Shakespeare with them, performed at Wilton on 2 December is a matter of firm historical record."<sup>14</sup> Park Honan agrees, adding that ". . . after a voyage to the Isle of Wight, James at last reached Wiltshire for a prolonged stay at Wilton House with the young Earl of Pembroke."<sup>15</sup>

It is striking how these details fit the information contained in the "lost letter."  
(Continued on page 10)

*Man Shakespeare* (continued from page 9)  
The ancient and cathedral city of Salisbury would have been an ideal place for the court of James to rest after returning from the Isle of Wight. The city is also situated at a short distance from Wilton House. The recent arrival of the King in Salisbury, together with Shakespeare's appearance at Wilton, undoubtedly gave the Countess her excuse for inviting James and his court to return to Wilton. "We have the man Shakespeare with us," she was able to write enticingly.

Mary Sidney's invitation indicates that Shakespeare was already a resident guest, who was, even then, preparing to stage *As You Like It* at the House. His arrival at Wilton must have been after James' departure at the end of August, and would therefore have been during September, or early October at the latest. The Wilton letter also implies that Lady Pembroke had an ulterior motive in proposing that James accept her hospitality. "She wanted to cajole the king in Raleigh's behalf." This comment from *A History of England* is totally apt for the autumn of 1603:

Raleigh and Cobham . . . were imprudent enough to furnish the court with suspicions by keeping company with persons who were no friends of the government . . . a charge for high treason was formed against him and his friends, and he . . . [was] taken into custody . . . for having formed a design to surprise the king, the royal family and the whole court at Greenwich and to have confined the king in the tower or in Dover Castle, till he had granted the terms they proposed. Besides this general charge, Raleigh and Cobham were charged in particular with having formed a scheme for placing the lady Arabella Stuart on the throne of England, and for introducing popery into the kingdom, in consideration of 600,000 crowns which were to be paid by the Spanish ambassador . . . " 16

Raleigh was at first held in Sir Thomas Bodley's house, but after several days he was transferred to the Tower of London to await trial. Despite any influence Lady Pembroke may have brought to bear upon the King, Raleigh was tried at Winchester, and on 17 November was declared guilty and sentenced to death as a traitor.

When viewed from the aspect of either the King's whereabouts in October 1603, or Raleigh's situation at that time, the

existence of the letter referred to in William Cory's journal is strikingly consistent with facts known from other sources. Even the reference to "Wolsey's room" is architecturally verifiable. If there is a problem, it is with "Shakespeare." According to Lady Mary Herbert, Shakespeare was at Wilton House while King James was still at Salisbury, and the King's Players were touring the Midlands prior to wintering at Augustine Phillips's house at Mortlake, a

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village nearly 100 miles distant from Wilton, and which lies between Putney and Richmond on the River Thames. It can, of course, be argued that Shakespeare too was sheltering from the plague. But, then, why was he not touring in safety with his players, or for that matter, why was he not at home with his wife and children in Stratford-upon-Avon?

These questions become even more perplexing in light of the known events of the Stratford Shakespeare's life both before and after James's visit to Wilton.

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1602, Shakespeare "of Stratford upon Avon" 17 paid £320 to William and John Combe for 107 acres of land in Old Stratford—about £160,000 or \$230,000 in today's money. Instead of dealing directly with the Combe family, Shakespeare had used his brother, Gilbert, to close the deal.

On 28 September 1602, Shakespeare purchased a cottage facing the garden of New Place together with about a quarter of an acre of adjoining land off "Walkers

Street alias Dead Lane." 18

Clearly, Shakespeare was heavily involved in commercial property transactions during this period, and his presence in Stratford throughout the year seems reasonably assured.

At some time after 19 May 1603, the date on which James issued a royal patent, by which the former Lord Chamberlain's Men became the King's Men, William Shakespeare is recorded—in Jonson's folio of 1616—as having been among the cast of Ben Jonson's tragedy *Sejanus His Fall*. The plague had closed all the public theatres by the middle of May, and they would not reopen for another year. Yet, the title page of the Folio clearly states that *Sejanus* was "Acted, in the yeere 1603. By the K. Maiesties Servants." 19 This seems to imply that the performance in question was at a Great House, not on the public stage.

The very next relevant item for the year records Shakespeare's appearance at Wilton House. This can be dated from his arrival—at the latest—during the beginning of October, through to his departure in the first week of December, at the very earliest.

Then, just four months later, when the plague had abated sufficiently for the theatres to reopen, Shakespeare re-emerges in a lodging-house on Silver Street in London, owned by Christopher Mountjoy:

It must have been a lively and somewhat notorious household; for the elders of the French Church in London formally reported that the Mountjoys lived 'a licentious life' and that both Mountjoy and his daughter's husband were 'debauched'. 20

Perhaps unsurprisingly, both Mountjoy and his son-in-law, Stephen Belott, ended up in court some years later, arguing over a disputed legacy. Both parties eventually called upon their friend and former lodger, Shakespeare, who had once been intimately involved in the cause of their dispute. He was asked to bear witness. His opening testimony was recorded, thus:

William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Aven in the Countrey of Warwicke gentleman of the age xlviij yeres or thereabouts sworne and examined the daye and yere abovesaid deposeth & sayeth To the first interrogatory this deponent

sayethe he knowethe the parties plaintiff and defendant and hath know them bothe as he now remembrethe for the space of tenne yeres or thereabouts,<sup>21</sup>

This deposition not only confirmed Shakespeare's 10-year friendship with Mountjoy and his "debauched" son-in-law, it also introduced another witness and former lodger from that time, a man with whom Shakespeare shared accommodation in Silver Street—George Wilkins.

In touch with the underworld and reputedly a brothel-keeper, Wilkins, in his late twenties, clearly had some acquaintance with Shakespeare. . . . He brutally kicked a pregnant woman in the belly; he beat another woman, and then stamped on her so that she had to be carried home. We know of his behaviour from legal records. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The point about these Silver Street references, which predate and encompass the year 1604, is their contrast to the reference to Shakespeare by Lady Pembroke in her letter. The Countess was an extremely well educated and cultured person. A. L. Rowse once described her as the finest woman poet of her age. She not only oversaw the publication of Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* but also completed his unfinished work on the Psalms. Amongst her other work were the translations of Du Plessis Mornay's *Discourse of Life and Death*, R. Garnier's Senecan tragedy *Antonius*, and Petrarch's *Trionfo della morte*.

Even Aubrey, who is not one of her indiscriminate admirers, admits that "she was a beautiful ladye, and had an excellent witt, and had the best breeding that that age could afford. . . . in her time Wilton House was like a college, there were so many learned and ingeniose persons. She was the greatest patroness of witt and learning of any lady in her time."<sup>23</sup>

But she was also a member of the post-feudal nobility, with the breeding that made her aware of the distinctions that had to be maintained between the class levels of society. Yet, in her letter, she speaks of Shakespeare as a man of repute and of such recognizable quality among the ruling class of society that the mere mention of his name is likely to be sufficient to bring the King of England to her Wiltshire home.

Unless one is willing to consider Shakespeare as an undiagnosed schizophrenic with a split mind disorder, these two accounts of his character are difficult to reconcile. Worse still, the contrast is magnified by three outstanding problems: first, the difficulty in accounting for Shakespeare's presence at Wilton House over a three-month stay in the autumn of 1603; second, the problem of accounting for his separation from the King's Men who

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***"It is in his role  
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best be understood..."***

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were on tour for the greater part of this period—while he was apparently secluded at Wilton; and, third, the curious fact that it was Heminges, not Shakespeare, who received payment for the performance given at Wilton House.

Provincial account books show Shakespeare's company having done their usual touring during the epidemic, performing in Bath, Shrewsbury, Coventry, and Ipswich on unspecified dates.<sup>24</sup>

The theatres closed on May 19<sup>th</sup> and in October the troupe were wintering at Mortlake, since this was apparently the month when they were summoned to Wilton House. Clearly, Shakespeare was not with them during that period: instead the records indicate that he was preparing for the performance of *As You Like It* at Wilton House.<sup>25</sup>

These difficulties melt away if one is prepared to accept the possibility that Shakespeare was an allonym: the name of

an actual living person who was being used by an author to dispense his work. For there are then two Shakespeares; one revealed to the public, the other concealed from the general view behind a theatrical curtain, such as that depicted in the enigmatic drawing published by Henry Peacham in his *Minerva Britannia* (1612). It is within this scenario that the Shakespeare of Silver Street no longer presents any difficulty. For he can then be seen in his proper setting, appearing most comfortable among the dissolute and the underworld, with whom he noticeably identifies.

It is in his role as a representative of the true author that Shakespeare's accommodation with the Mountjoys, during the early spring of 1604, can best be understood, since it provided him with a base from which to perform his next duty to the state. The man known to public theatregoers as "Shakespeare" was required to be seen in public, in company with the King's Men, as part of James's entry parade into London. Only a few days earlier he had been attending to his business interests in Stratford, as appears evident from his supplying 20 bushels of malt to his neighbor, Philip Rogers, an apothecary who had recently been licensed to sell ale but who was to fall behind with his payment. It was at this time that Shakespeare learned he would have to travel to London so that he might join the parade, and thereby publicly confirm his identity as a member the King's Men. This would explain his sudden and, no doubt, hurried departure from Stratford before he had time to recover his debt.

In order to attire themselves for the royal occasion:

. . . the playwright and eight of his fellows were each given four and a half yards of cheap red cloth for gowns. . . . Troupes did not parade in the streets on 15 March, so it seems Shakespeare did not march. . . .<sup>26</sup>

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, the theatres were allowed to reopen, the plague having sufficiently abated. But this major event—important because the theatres had been dormant for a year and were therefore in need of energy and effort for their regeneration—does not appear to have detained Shakespeare in London. By June, he is to be found once more in Stratford. "Philip Rogers. . . on 25

*(Continued on page 12)*

*Man Shakespeare (cont'd from page 11)*  
June borrowed 2s [2 shillings from him].”<sup>27</sup>

In July 1604, we find “Willielmus Shaxpere” bringing legal action to collect a debt in the amount of £1. 15s. 10d. from Philip Rogers, for malt with which he had supplied the debtor beginning in the preceding March.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, in London, on 18<sup>th</sup> August at Somerset House, King James was successfully concluding a peace treaty with the Spanish ambassador, which finally brought to a close the longstanding conflict between England and Spain. As part of the entertainment provided for this occasion:

... there survives in the Public Record Office an account of the Treasurer of the King's Chamber showing that James paid Augustine Phillips, John Heminges and ten of their ‘fellows’ to attend the Spanish at Somerset House as ‘grooms of the Chamber and Players’.<sup>29</sup>

Once again it is Heminges who is the company payee. Shakespeare is not mentioned. This failure to record his name surely implies that he was not present. Apparently, he was still in Stratford pursuing his outstanding debt, no doubt aided by the bailiff to whom his plea had been made, and, quite sensibly, attending to his recent property acquisitions. His separation from the King's Men during the summertime of 1603 and 1604—the busiest season of the year for an actor, because of the sunshine and longer daylight hours—was, so we are told, not unusual: “. . . he spent part of most summers among his family, as the diarist Aubrey reported.”<sup>30</sup>

“The man Shakespeare,” who resided three months or more at Wilton House in Wiltshire during the fall of 1603, as a respectable and honored guest of Lady Pembroke, can now be seen in full contrast to this suspect figure of the same ‘name’, who was apt to spend his summer months in distant Stratford “among his family,” far removed from both the working actors with whom he is identified, and the Silver Street underclass in whose company he so easily found favour.

By contrast, Mary Sidney's guest appears to have been a high-ranking and well-educated nobleman; a recognizable figure in society, but presumably unable to identify himself in public as a playwright, because it was seen by his peers as a de-

meaning occupation that principally benefited the low-born acting fraternity; a person of quality, who having vacated his London home to find shelter from the plague, was readily welcomed in one of the great intellectual households of Wiltshire; a writer with the recognized status to summon the King's Men at Mortlake in order to arrange for a play he had written to be enacted for the pleasure of his majesty and the court. No wonder the incriminating

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letter has conveniently disappeared from view!

To put a name to this high-ranking nobleman, one need look no farther than Edward de Vere, whose coat of arms may well form part of those to be found on the temple known as “Shakespeare's House.”<sup>31</sup> Apart from being the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford and Lord Great Chamberlain of England, he was first the ward and then the son-in-law of Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's chief adviser. Oxford's youthful reputation as a court poet and his subsequent association with men of letters have become so widely documented as to require no further justification. Added to this we have his close affinity with the Pembroke family, fostered by a shared interest in education, literature and Italianate culture, as well as the forthcoming nuptials between his daughter and their second son. These connections give impetus to a conclusion that Lady Pembroke used the “Shakespeare” allonym of her guest, so that it might provide sufficient inducement for James to revisit her at Wilton, where she could “cajole the king in Raleigh's behalf—he came.”

Further evidence supports this conclusion. The temple built by Lady Mary Herbert to Shakespeare's memory in the grounds of her Wilton home implies much that has been ignored in the Stratfordian tradition—not just the presence of an actor, but something extra, some “divine” miracle of creation, for which a temple was the appropriate response. The writing of a new Shakespeare play or the revision of earlier work by the author in person would be sufficient to merit such a reaction, particularly from an admirer of good literature who recognized that immortal quality, which only true genius can bestow, present on her estate in 1603. There is also the fact that Oxford died shortly after James's stay at Wilton. What more perfect tribute would there be to the death of this playwright, six months after the King's visit, than to adorn the walls of a temple to “his” memory, with the “portrait busts” of great classical writers from antiquity, and in their midst place that most poignant of memorial quotations from “his” Scottish play: “Life's but a walking shadow . . . ?” Nor must it be ignored that the river Avon and its two tributaries flow through the Wilton Parkland.

Therefore, when Ben Jonson subsequently came to the House, and a room was set aside for his use, would he not have been moved to moments of reflection upon seeing “Shakespeare's House” standing nearby, and the time spent at Wilton by the man he loved and did honour “(on this side Idolatry) as much as any”? Was it, then, to that “memory” he addressed his immortal epithet: “Sweet Swan of Avon”?

References:

#### References:

<sup>1</sup> *Ungentle Shakespeare*, Katherine Duncan-Jones. p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Eton College is one of the most prestigious public schools in England. It has stood opposite Windsor, the home of the English monarchy, since 1440, and is currently educating Prince Charles' second son, Prince Harry. In 1845, the College appointed former pupil William Johnson as an Assistant Master of Greek; it was an appointment that was to last up until his resignation in 1872. Six months after resigning, Johnson adopted his grandmother's maiden name of Cory, and

it is by this title that all references to him have been made.

In February 1842, aged nineteen, Cory was admitted to King's College Cambridge. By the following year, he had won the Chancellor's medal for English Verse with his poem of 200 lines in rhymed couplets on Plato. One year later he was awarded the Camden Medal for his Latin hexameters on Archimedes. In 1845 he became a Fellow of King's, an appointment he held up until six months after his resignation from Eton. His parents, Charles and Theresa (née Furse), a great-niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, were cousins and prosperous Devon folk. The family name of Furse (Ferse of Spreytown) can be traced back to its Devonian origins in the Domesday Book of 1085-86.

During his lifetime, William Cory established an enviable reputation as both translator and lyric poet. He is still noted for having written "The Eton Boating Song" (1865) and for having later published the much acclaimed "Heraclitus in Ionica." At the age of 56, after settling for a short while in Madeira, he married Rosa Caroline, daughter of George de Carteret Guille, the incumbent minister of Little Torrington in Devon. Their son, Andrew, was born a year later. While in Madeira he began writing A Guide to Modern English History, but it was not a

commercial success, although critically described as "unrivalled for luminous appreciation of character." The family eventually returned to England and settled in Hampstead, north of London. It was there on June 11<sup>th</sup> 1892 that William Cory died.

<sup>3</sup> *American & Commonwealth Visitor*. London, May 1951. (Official publication promoting 'The Neighbouring town of Wilton' for visitors to The Festival of Britain). Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, ref. 2057-H4/11.

<sup>4</sup> *William Cory*, Faith Compton Mackenzie. p. xii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. xi.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 88.

<sup>7</sup> Extracts from the *Letters and Journals of William Cory*, Francis Warre-Cornish. p. 168.

<sup>8</sup> English Homes No. XI, Wilton House, Edward Rose, p.177 (*Illustrated London News*, August 6<sup>th</sup> 1887).

<sup>9</sup> *As You Like It* (New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare), edited by Richard Knowles. 1977 Modern Language Association of America, p. 633-34.

<sup>10</sup> Personal correspondence from Wilton House, 15 May 2002.

<sup>11</sup> *The King's England Wiltshire*, Arthur Mee, p. 380.

<sup>12</sup> *Shakespeare The Evidence*, Ian Wilson. p. 299

<sup>13</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol IX,

Edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, p.679.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, op. cit. p. 299-300.

<sup>15</sup> *Shakespeare A Life*, Park Honan. p. 301.

<sup>16</sup> *A History of England*, Vol. 2, William Henry Montague. p. 86-87.

<sup>17</sup> *The Mystery of William Shakespeare*, Charlton Ogburn, Jr. (London : Cardinal, 1988) p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ben Jonson Five Plays*, edited by G. A. Wilkes. p. 101.

<sup>20</sup> *Dr. Simon Forman*, Judith Cook. p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> *Shakespeare Court, Crowd and Playhouse*, François Laroque. p. 131.

<sup>22</sup> Honan, op. cit. p. 328-329.

<sup>23</sup> *Twelve Centuries of Wilton House*, Sylvia Crawley. p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, op. cit. p. 299.

<sup>25</sup> *William Cory*, Faith Compton Mackenzie. p. 88.

<sup>26</sup> Honan, op. cit. p. 303.

<sup>27</sup> *Shakespeare His Life, Work and Era*, Dennis Kay. p. 274.

<sup>28</sup> Ogburn, op. cit. p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> Wilson, op. cit. p. 304.

<sup>30</sup> Kay, op. cit. p. 274.

<sup>31</sup> Shakespeare House, English Homes No. XI, Wilton House, Edward Rose, p. 174 (*Illustrated London News*, August 6<sup>th</sup> 1887).

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*As You Like It* (cont'd from page 1)  
*This Star of England* and was further developed by Oxfordian Charles Boyle in an unpublished 1995 conference paper. This article will examine the idea in more detail.

Some background, including an overview of mainstream criticism, may be helpful. Although *As You Like It* did not appear in print until the First Folio in 1623, the first external evidence of its existence is traced to 1600, when that title, together with three other plays, is entered in the Stationers Register "to be stayed."<sup>1</sup> Stratfordians generally have little trouble dating its composition to 1599, though many agree that the play shows signs of revision. That year may be "confidently accepted," says George Lyman Kittredge, because of the fact that the play is not among those listed by Meres in 1598, and because it contains an allusion to Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, a work not published until 1598. Kittredge also cites Jaques's famous "All the world's a stage" speech (II.vii.) as further evidence of composition in 1599, linking it to the opening of the Globe Theatre that year.<sup>2</sup> Kittredge himself thought that the 1599 effort was a revision of an earlier work.<sup>3</sup> A.L. Rowse believed that the play had been written earlier "for private performance," while John Dover Wilson offered an ingenious theory that it had been first written in the summer of 1593 and was heavily revised in 1600.<sup>4</sup>

Some Stratfordians offer more fanciful notions, particularly when speculating on the play's title. One asserts that "Shakespeare laughed out the title one day after reading what he had written,"<sup>5</sup> while another conjectures that "a Globe manager-actor sent a note over to Will at Blackfriars asking for a name . . . Will was busy that week . . . So he just scrawled, in effect, 'no preference' across it and sent the tricky slave back."<sup>6</sup>

As to the source of the play, Stratfordians are unanimous in identifying Thomas Lodge's novel, *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie*, first published in 1590.<sup>7</sup> Lodge, in turn, seems to have been inspired by an anonymous fourteenth century poem, *The Coke's Tale of Gamelyn*,



"Abandon the society of this female, or, clown, thou perishest." (Act V, scene i)

though the latter story was not printed until 1721.<sup>8</sup> The basic plot of Lodge's novel is almost identical to the central story of *As You Like It*—the daughter of a banished French king (Rosalynde) falls in love with a young man (Rosader) she sees in a wrestling match; she and her cousin (Alinda) are banished by the usurping king, and, disguised as Ganymede and Aliena, they flee to the Forest of Ardenne; there they encounter Rosader, who has fled there himself to escape the wrath of his evil older brother (Saladyne); a romance develops between Rosalynde and Rosader; Saladyne is later exiled to the forest by the usurping king, where he reforms and falls in love with Alinda; finally, news arrives that the usurping king has been overthrown, and Rosader is named the rightful heir.<sup>9</sup>

While Shakespeare retained the central story of Rosalynde in fashioning *As You Like It*, he made several changes. Among the most obvious are the names of the characters. Although Rosalynde keeps her name (now spelled Rosalind), and the two females' forest aliases are retained, the other main characters' names are changed—younger brother Rosader becomes Orlando, older brother Saladyne becomes Oliver, and Rosalind's cousin Alinda is now Celia; a minor character, the old shepherd Corydon, is now Corin. Cu-

riously, even the forest itself undergoes a slight transformation, from the very French Forest of Ardenne to the apparently English Forest of Arden.<sup>10</sup> More importantly, Shakespeare added two main characters—Jaques and Touchstone—and several minor ones, including Audrey and William. As one critic observes, "these additional characters add nothing at all to the story—if you were to tell it, you would leave them out. They show us that story was not Shakespeare's concern in this play; its soul is not to be looked for there."<sup>11</sup> To others, the addition of characters "vivifies the play."<sup>12</sup>

A fair sampling of Stratfordian opinion discloses that the play is considered one of Shakespeare's best comedies, showing the author's "characteristic excellence. . . and [his] distinctive virtues as a writer of comedy have their fullest scope."<sup>13</sup> Swinden calls it "the most

perfect" of the comedies, Gardner "the most refined and exquisite," and Ward cites its "most extraordinary elusive subtlety."<sup>14</sup> There is also general agreement that dramatic, or comic, action is almost nonexistent in the play; instead, the focus is on dialogue and the developing relationships between and among the characters. "[T]he manner of the play, when once it settles down in the forest, is to let two people drift together, talk a little, and part, to be followed by two more. Sometimes a pair will be watched by others, who will sometimes comment on what they see. . . . This may all sound rather static, but such is the ease and rapidity with which pairs and groups break up, re-form and succeed one another on the stage that there is a sense of fluid movement."<sup>15</sup> To another Stratfordian, "Talk is the very medium of *As You Like It*. Action is absent, and language is abundantly rich, allegorical at least of the foliage of the forest where it occurs. The characters spend much of their time talking, simply talking."<sup>16</sup> Within such a format, the author satirizes the concepts of pastoral life and pastoral romance, and further explores themes of preservation and order, time and timelessness, all within a forest which is "no conventional arcadia."<sup>17</sup>

These interpretations, it must be con-

ceded, are sound, especially if the play is analyzed as a work of the late 1590s largely derived from a then-popular book. Their soundness is reinforced if extensive thought is not given to why Shakespeare made the changes that he did to Lodge's novel. An Oxfordian interpretation will not supplant this set of interpretations, but will supplement it.<sup>18</sup>

As to the time of composition of the play, Oxfordian Eva Turner Clark points us to a period shortly after November 1581, when Queen Elizabeth pledged to wed her longtime French suitor, the Duke of Alençon.<sup>19</sup> As Clark sees things, Alençon is the prototype of Orlando (even down to his "little beard," III.ii.);<sup>20</sup> his secretary de Bex is that of the minor (and similarly named) character Le Beau; his envoy Simier is that of Orlando's servant Adam;<sup>21</sup> and Alençon's brother, King Henry III of France, is that of Orlando's brother Oliver. If Alençon is Orlando, then to Clark it follows that Elizabeth herself must be Rosalind; support for that may be found not only in the relationship between the two characters, including the mock marriage between Orlando and Rosalind when she is disguised as Ganymed (which Clark takes to be a direct allusion to Elizabeth's 1581 public declaration of intent to marry), but also in such details as Rosalind's gift of a chain to Orlando (which Clark interprets as an allusion to Elizabeth's gift of one of her garters to a French emissary, who in turn gave it to Alençon). And in the melancholy Jaques, Clark sees that Oxford grafted something of himself, including the highly personal references to Jaques as an exiled courtier, and a traveler who has sold his "own lands to see other men's" (IV,i.24). Although Clark does not speak of revision of the play, she suggests that the scene between Touchstone and William (V,i.) was inserted in 1589, as was the character of Sir Oliver Mar-text.

If Clark's principal composition date is correct, then what does that do to the relationship between *As You Like It* and Lodge's *Rosalynde*? Obviously, the play could not have been based on the novel. On the other hand, the similarities between the two works are too striking for them to have been written entirely independently of one another.<sup>22</sup> Could it be that *Rosalynde* was derived from an early version of *As You Like It*? Charlton Ogburn thought so,<sup>23</sup> and there is evidence to support this view.

Although Lodge's *Rosalynde* was published in 1590, the book was written (according to Lodge's dedication) "to beguile the time" on a voyage with a Captain Clarke to the islands of Terceras and the Canaries. Kittredge believes the voyage to have been "about 1588,"<sup>24</sup> but a biographer of Lodge has uncovered a record of a voyage to the Canaries by a Captain Clarke in 1585.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the euphuistic style of *Rosalynde* would suggest a date of 1585

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***"A glance at the  
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and two  
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rather than 1590, because the euphuistic "rage" was launched in the late 1570s and had already begun to fade by 1590.

If, then, Lodge's novel is derived from a pre-1585 version of *As You Like It*, the play must not have contained characters such as Jaques and Touchstone, for Lodge would not have excised figures of such importance in reworking the story. Thus, it is plausible that very substantial revisions were made to the play during the late 1580s, and, as we shall see, further revisions came even later. Let us now turn to the play to look for specific evidence of revision. [Much of the following is taken from Kristian Smidt's *Unconformities in Shakespeare's Later Comedies*, a very perceptive work by a Stratfordian analyst.]

A glance at the list of characters suggests something is amiss, for there are two characters named Jaques and two named Oliver. Any dramatist would avoid this

clumsy, and potentially confusing, situation, especially if he were creating the work during one span of time. In the play as it has come down to us, the "first" Jaques is the middle brother of Oliver and Orlando, a minor character; he is mentioned by name at the beginning of the play (I,i.5), but does not make an entrance until the end (V,iv.158). The "second" Jaques is the melancholy Jaques, a major character who appears throughout the play beginning at II,v. Coincidentally, he too is mentioned by name (II,i.26) some time before his entrance. Based on a close reading of the text, Smidt offers a very sensible explanation of the "unconformity" of the two Jaques. The first Jaques is mentioned by name only once, in Orlando's opening dialogue with Adam, as Orlando explains his dire situation to his old servant. Two dozen lines later, Orlando's brother Oliver appears, and much of the same information is repeated during the brothers' quarrel. "It would be a reasonable guess to suppose that Shakespeare first wrote that opening passage as we have it, then thought it was a clumsy expository device to have Orlando explain things to Adam which the old man must have well known, and wrote a quarrel scene with Oliver to replace it. In so doing he would have discarded Orlando's mention of his second brother . . . and left himself free to use the name of Jaques for another character."<sup>26</sup> It should also be noted that when the "first" Jaques finally appears in the play, the stage direction refers to him merely as "second brother," that the character introduces himself as "the second Son" (V,iv.160), and that no one else refers to him by name. This further indicates that, in the final version of the play, the second brother was not intended to share a name with another character.<sup>27</sup>

The second paired character name is Oliver, who as a main character is the evil older brother, and as a minor one is the forest vicar, Sir Oliver Mar-text. Oliver Mar-text appears briefly in only one scene (III,iii, with only three speeches) and is referred to once later. The first name may be a reference to Oliver Pigge, a Puritan minister about whom a song was licensed in 1584.<sup>28</sup> Oxfordians and Stratfordians agree that "Mar-text" is an allusion to the Martin Mar-prelate controversy – a series of pamphlets "promoting the Puritan cause

*(Continued on page 16)*

*As You Like It* (continued from page 15)

and attacking the Episcopacy, signed Martin Marprelate"—which began in late 1588 and reached its height a few months later.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the second Oliver character cannot have existed before 1589, and it is likely that the duplication of name was intentional in this case.

Smidt notes several more "unconformities," all of which again point to a revision or a reworking: whether the usurping duke or the banished duke is named Frederick; whether the duke's banishment was recent or distant; and whether Rosalind is taller than Celia. She further notes that these inconsistencies usually arise when there is a change from prose to blank verse, and concludes, "it looks like Shakespeare began writing the play in prose and when he got to the point of emotional ignition, so to speak, thought that verse would be in keeping with the importance of the occasion and the dignity of the characters."<sup>30</sup>

To an Oxfordian, that "emotional ignition" occurred when the author decided to depict himself. In a play which centers around pairings, it is not surprising that he did so by putting himself into a pair of characters — the melancholy Jaques and the wise fool Touchstone. It is not necessary to discuss in depth the numerous parallels between Oxford and this pair; both are exiled courtiers, one of whom (as noted above) is a traveler who has "sold [his] own lands to see other men's." As one Stratfordian perceptively notes, Jaques dwells on three main themes throughout the play — "the fool and his role; his own right to speak to the world; [and] that world itself as a mere stage of stage players."<sup>31</sup> All of those themes, of course, are central to Oxford, and appear over and over again in the dramatic works. Touchstone, in the eyes of another critic, "is a man of intelligence and insight, under no illusions about the Court — or Arden, for that matter."<sup>32</sup> Together, the pair acts much like the chorus of ancient drama.<sup>33</sup>

For our purposes, it may be helpful to view Jaques as Oxford the observer, and Touchstone as Oxford the expresser. Imbued with melancholy — a melancholy which he actually enjoys (see II, v. 9-19)<sup>34</sup> — Jaques is first described to us as weeping at the plight of a wounded deer. His very name is a play on words: the name is not pronounced "Jacques," but rather "jakes," Elizabethan slang for a privy.<sup>35</sup> Through-

out the play he remains cynical; in his most famous speech (II, vii.), chronicling the seven ages of man, he dwells on the drawbacks and infirmities attendant on each of the seven periods. At the end of the play, as the other main characters march off in their ordered pairs, he is the only one not to be paired off, and the only major character who will not return to the court.

Of course, the one character with whom Jaques should be paired is the one who

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***and Touchstone***

***as Oxford the***

***expresser.*"**

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brings him joy: Touchstone. Jaques's only real moment of happiness is when he muses rhapsodically on his first encounter with Touchstone in the forest (II, vii. 12-61) and wishes that he, too, were a fool. However, as the play develops, Touchstone appears to have found himself a mate — or has he?

Touchstone is a fool, but he "plays no practical jokes, sets no traps, hides in no corners, gets no one drunk, brings no false tidings."<sup>36</sup> His very name suggests that he tests things.<sup>37</sup> To Stratfordians, this sense of testing is narrow, existing only within the play itself. "[H]e tests all that the world takes for gold, especially the gold of the golden world of pastoralism' . . . Touchstone in his relationships advances a standard by which we are invited to measure the relationships in the play."<sup>38</sup> To Oxfordians the character name has a broader significance, suggesting that Touchstone (the author as the utterer) is

testing for truth.

We first encounter Touchstone at the court, where he jests with Rosalind and Celia. At the end of Act I, when the two ladies have been banished, Celia is confident that he can be persuaded to join them in exile. They simply desire his company; because Rosalind has already decided to disguise herself as a male in the forest, his presence is not needed to provide for their safety. Celia's confidence is well-placed; Touchstone happily accompanies them to, and within, the Forest of Arden. The trio arrives in the forest in Act II, scene iv, and shortly encounter the two shepherds, old Corin and young Silvius. We next see Touchstone in Act III, scene ii, when he matches wits with Corin, comparing life at court to the pastoral life. Up to this point, Touchstone appears to be a fairly conventional fool, exchanging in witty banter and playing on words. His special qualities begin to develop in the next scene.

In Act III, scene iii, Jaques and Touchstone appear together for the first time, and the fool is accompanied by a woman, the forest goatherd Audrey. Within a few lines we learn that Touchstone intends to marry Audrey as soon as possible. It is unusual for a Shakespearean fool to be depicted as fully male; most are styled as apparently sexless windbags.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, there is no "backstory" about Audrey; we do not know where or how they met (presumably it was in the forest). To Stratfordian critics, the Touchstone-Audrey match is a burlesque, a counterpoint to the pastoral romantic nature of the other three forest pairings; Touchstone is seen as impelled by sexual desire to wed — and bed — Audrey as quickly as can be arranged.<sup>40</sup> Audrey, with a scant dozen speeches in the entire play, is perceived by Stratfordians as "sluttish" and "graceless."<sup>41</sup> To at least one Stratfordian, the inclusion of Audrey was an unfortunate mistake by the author.<sup>42</sup> However, if we examine the scene with Oxfordian eyes, something altogether different suggests itself.

First, the very name Audrey is significant. Although, as a proper name, its derivation is Anglo-Saxon,<sup>43</sup> Shakespeare may be suggesting a connection to the Latin verb *audire* — to hear — from which the familiar words "audience," "audit," and "auditory" are derived. Shakespeare's dramatic words were written, of course, but they were written to be heard by an audi-



ence. This is the first clue that Audrey may not personify a human being. Next, it is apparent that she does not understand much of what Touchstone says; she is unfamiliar with “feature” and “poetical,” for example, two words with which even an unsophisticated country wench would be acquainted. However, those words may have additional meaning in the scene. Touchstone’s question to Audrey — “Doth my simple Feature content you?” — is usually taken to mean “Are you pleased with my ordinary looks,” with a possible sexual suggestion as well (“Does my [uniquely male] feature make you happy”). But if Touchstone represents the author, “feature” could mean not the form of the physical body or face, but a creation made by Touchstone,<sup>44</sup> and “content” could mean not “to make happy,” but rather “to comprise.” The question then becomes a rhetorical one: “Are you comprised of my creation[s]?” Audrey, then, is not merely a country wench, but represents the author’s dramatic works. If she personifies an inanimate object, she then would not “understand” the meanings of words.

The scene continues. After Audrey misunderstands the question (“Your Features, Lord warrant us; what Features?”), Touchstone responds with a play on words (“Goats” and “Gothes”) while comparing his plight to that of “honest Ovid.”<sup>45</sup> The remark cannot be intended for Audrey; if she does not know what “Feature” means, she certainly would not recognize the name of a Roman poet. Jaques then weighs in (“O Knowledge ill inhabited, worse than Jove in a thatch’d House”), reinforcing the reference to Ovid with one of his own.<sup>46</sup> It is usually assumed that the speech is directed at Touchstone, but it is possible that the phrase “O knowledge ill inhabited” is intended to describe Audrey. Touchstone replies, “When a man’s Verses cannot be understood . . . it strikes a man more dead than a great Reckoning in a little Room.” Critical attention is generally lavished on the latter phrase, with the supposed allusion to the death of playwright Christopher Marlowe in a tavern quarrel in 1593; that supposition may be well founded, for there appear to be two other references to Marlowe’s work in the play.<sup>47</sup> But perhaps the author himself may have had his own “great Reckoning” concerning the publication of his works; and, if it had been made plain to him that someone else’s name

would be attached to their publication, he would have worried (and justifiably so) that his “Verses” would not then “be understood.”

Touchstone then turns to Audrey, and says, “truly, I would the Gods had made thee poetical.” Characteristically, Audrey does not understand the word, and wonders, “Is it honest in Deed and Word: is it a true thing?” Touchstone explains that it is not, that “the truest Poetry is the most

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***“Audrey, then,  
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faining.” He reiterates his wish that Audrey were poetical, and laments that “thou swear’st to me thou art honest.” There are further references to “honest” and “honesty;” the two words occur seven times in the first three dozen lines of the scene.<sup>48</sup> Conventional criticism holds that “honest” and “honesty” as used here refer to chastity, but if Audrey is what we think, the words connote truth and truthfulness.

Of all the qualities that a suitor might wish his intended bride to possess, being “poetical” would likely not rank high on the list. The author’s repeated use of the word must be deliberate, however, and is understood as something more than word-play if Touchstone and Audrey are seen as the author and the dramatic works. What he is saying is that the dramatic works are honest, that they depict the truth. And their very honesty is a likely impediment to the marriage. In contrast, if the dramatic works

were merely “poetical,” they would (almost by definition) not be honest, and there would, perhaps, be no such impediment.

At this point we should speak about marriage, the pair’s intended destination. Of all the attributes of marriage — a physical and legal union, recognized by law and by God — the most significant in this context is that the bride will take the groom’s name. In other words, the author’s paramount hope (although unarticulated) is that the works will be published under his own name. To be sure, Oxford must have realized that it would have been virtually impossible for his works to have been so published. As Diana Price and others have noted, in a class-bound society such as his it was unthinkable for a nobleman to publish an original work as his own; to have done so would have brought disgrace to the family name and to all of nobility. Publishing plays would have been an especially low blow. At the same time, Oxford must have felt the all-too-human pride of authorship, and part of him must have chafed at the necessity to hide behind another name.

As the characters wait for the vicar to arrive, Audrey remarks that “I am not a Slut, though I thank the Gods I am foul.” Interestingly, the words “foul” and “foulness” occur three times within a space of four lines. One cannot help thinking here that Audrey is describing herself not as plain-looking or unattractive—even if she were, why would she “thank the Gods” for it?—but rather that she is describing herself literally as “foul,” meaning handwritten and hand-corrected.<sup>49</sup>

In due course the “Vicar of the next Village” arrives, ready to perform the ceremony. Curiously, he bears the name Sir Oliver Mar-text. This name is usually taken as an allusion to the Martin Mar-prelate controversy of 1588-1589, with a possible secondary allusion to the minister Oliver Pigge (see above) and a suggestion in “Mar-text” that the poor fellow will be unable to get the formalities right. Many critics see the vicar as a Puritan,<sup>50</sup> with one noting that his “very name suggests the real problems the church has always faced in country parishes.”<sup>51</sup> To an Oxfordian, however, the name Mar-text suggests not only the Martin Mar-prelate affair, but also the “real problems” the author was about to face if

*(Continued on page 18)*

*As You Like It* (continued from page 17) he went forward with his plans to “marry,” or publish the works under his own name. The text would, if it were then published, have to be marred in order to obscure the truth.

Nevertheless, it appears that the marriage will take place. Jaques at first agrees to give the bride away, but then abruptly counsels Touchstone to postpone the wedding until he can find “a good Priest that can tell you what Marriage is.” Touchstone agrees, and addresses Audrey: “Come, sweet Audrey/We must be married, or we must live in Bawdry.” In other words, if they do not get married, they will still have a physical relationship, but Audrey will not belong to him legally and will not share his name. Bearing in mind that Jaques, as well as Touchstone, represents Oxford, it may be suggested that the author had talked himself out of going ahead with publication at this early time.

Here the play takes leave of Touchstone and Audrey for a while. But it seems clear that theirs is no ordinary relationship. Although many critics see the pair as driven by sexual impulse, I do not believe Audrey exhibits any sexual desire. One Stratfordian critic has gotten it right when he concludes that Audrey, whoever or whatever she is, “is an object to be possessed.”<sup>52</sup>

With an aborted marriage ceremony as prelude, we now arrive at V.i., the truly extraordinary scene with Touchstone, Audrey and William. Nothing in the play has prepared us for it, and, as noted earlier, the play would not suffer if the scene were omitted. Why, then, did the author bother with this digression? Few Stratfordian critics have paid much attention to the scene; indeed, many do not mention it at all in their analysis of the play. Dover Wilson cites the comic effect of Touchstone “lord-ing it as a courtier, a gentleman and a philosopher, over the simple rustics of Arden.”<sup>53</sup> Swinden echoes that view, terming it another example of “bringing together different members of different groups for purposes of dispute and argument.”<sup>54</sup> Ward sees the scene as another example of Touchstone’s tendency to bully the locals.<sup>55</sup> Jenkins suggests that Touchstone “not only deprives the yokel William of his mistress, but steals his part in the play, making it in the process of infinitely greater significance.”<sup>56</sup> Berry has looked at the scene a bit more deeply, observing

that the “unfortunate William finds Touchstone in a terrible mood, and his cadenza on the means whereby William is to be destroyed effectively exposes William’s pretensions to the hand of Audrey. It is a complete demolition of an inferior.”<sup>57</sup> To be sure, there is comic irony in the banishment of William from the forest by Touchstone, one of those banished to the forest. To an Oxfordian, however, the scene is of far more significance.

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It opens with Touchstone and Audrey walking together through the forest; Audrey wistfully notes that she would have been happy to have had Mar-text marry them, but Touchstone responds that Sir Oliver (who had only three innocuous speeches) is “wicked” and “vile.” He then turns their conversation to something more important to both of them, a rival for Audrey’s hand whose existence is already known to him: “But Audrey, there is a Youth here in the Forest lays claim to you.” The words “lays claim” are significant, for they suggest a “claim” in the legal, not amorous, sense. This connotation is reinforced by Audrey’s reply: “Ay, I know who ‘tis: he hath no Interest in me in the World.” The word “interest” again suggests a legal term, not a romantic one; this is reinforced a few lines later, when William, answering one of Touchstone’s queries, agrees that he loves Audrey. William’s love for her must

have been known to Audrey, so when she tells Touchstone that William “hath no Interest” in her, she is either lying or is using “Interest” in a specific sense. We already know that she considers herself “honest,” so we should conclude that she is not referring to a romantic “Interest,” but rather to a legal one.

William then makes his appearance. The Stratfordian consensus is predictable — poor William is a “yokel,” a “dumb yokel,” and “a dolt” of “bumpkinish ways.”<sup>58</sup> Let us pause to consider the name, something few Stratfordians seem to have done.<sup>59</sup> The William of *As You Like It* lives in the Forest of Arden, close to Stratford-on-Avon; of the several non-historical Williams in the plays, this one would appear to be the most personal to the Stratford man. It seems odd, though not inconceivable, that an author would loan his own first name to such an apparently unimportant, unsophisticated and unimpressive character. But Oxfordians find it not odd at all; Ogburn observes that several of Shakespeare’s non-historical Williams, including those who do not appear but are merely referred to, are cast in unflattering terms.<sup>60</sup> Such a consistent categorization of Wills and Williams suggests that the author had something definite in mind when using the name—to Oxfordians, of course, a deliberate reminder that the most famous “William” was not who he seemed to be.

Noting William’s entrance, Touchstone eagerly awaits the opportunity to belittle the country “Clown,” noting (as much to the audience as to Audrey) that “we that have good Wits have much to answer for.” The implication, of course, is that William does not have “good Wit,” a point that will soon become obvious. William is literally a man of few words; in his 11 speeches are a total of 44 words, only five of which are of more than one syllable (including his own name and that of Audrey). William has removed his hat as a sign of deference to Touchstone—the fool, in other words, is his social superior. Touchstone graciously bids William to put his hat back on and begins to question him. In short order we learn three things about the “Forest Youth”: he is “five and twenty,” his name is indeed William, and he was born in the Forest of Arden. Let us look more closely at each of these responses.

That William is age 25 suggests that the

scene was added in 1589 or 1590, when William Shakspeare was exactly that age; it is also possible that the scene was added even later, but was intended to refer specifically to that period. There are two reasons in support of the deliberate reference to 1589-1590: First, for comedic purposes the scene would work just as well, if not better, if poor William did not know exactly how old he was; therefore it must be significant that William in fact knows his age. Second, to Oxfordians there is ample evidence throughout the plays that when the author makes specific time references, he is doing so deliberately. A few examples, familiar to most Oxfordians, will suffice: the reference in *Romeo and Juliet* to an earthquake “eleven years” earlier suggests the Verona earthquake of 1570, thus a composition date of 1581;<sup>61</sup> the reference in *Cymbeline* to the abduction of Guiderius and Arviragus 20 years previously parallels Queen Elizabeth’s “banishment” of the two sons of Edward Seymour and Lady Catherine Grey in 1561, again suggesting a composition date of 1581;<sup>62</sup> and in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, the robbery of the king’s receivers by Prince Hal’s followers is dated as May 20<sup>th</sup> in the fourteenth year of Henry IV’s reign, while the real-life robbery at Gad’s Hill of two of Oxford’s former employees took place during May in the fourteenth year of Elizabeth’s reign.<sup>63</sup>

After eliciting William’s age, Touchstone inquires, “Is thy name William?” William replies, “William, Sir.” Touchstone already knows this fact; Audrey has greeted William by name only six lines earlier. Thus, the reiteration of the name bit must be to set up Touchstone’s response: “A fair Name.” The pun on fair/Vere (pronounced *ver*) seems obvious—William is a name used by de Vere.

William’s acknowledgment that he was born in “the Forest here” further indicates a specific reference to William Shakspeare, for the Forest of Arden is only a short distance from Stratford-on-Avon. Oxford himself was also associated with two places close by the Forest of Arden, Billesley Hall and Bilton Hall.<sup>64</sup>

The questioning continues. “Art rich?” “Faith Sir, so, so.” Touchstone quibbles on “so-so.” “Art thou wise?” “Ay Sir, I have a pretty Wit.” Touchstone recalls the proverb of the fool and the wise man, then speaks of the “Heathen Philosopher” who

would “open his Lips” when “he had a desire to eat a Grape.” The latter reference is still not fully understood; some critics suggest that it is merely a comedic device to accompany William, who has begun to open his mouth in amazement. Back to the interrogation: “You love this Maid?” “I do, Sir.” The significance of this exchange is noted above, indicating that Audrey’s earlier use of the word “interest” is meant in a legal sense.

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***“That William Shakspeare  
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Next, Touchstone commands William, “Give me your Hand: art thou learned?” “No sir.” According to the Oxford English Dictionary, in early usage the word “learned” did not connote erudition or “profound knowledge” of something, but rather meant “taught, instructed [or] educated.” Thus, William seems to be admitting that he is unschooled or illiterate. That William Shakspeare was illiterate comes as no surprise to Oxfordians; it is sobering, however, to have it pointed out by the true author.

Now the scene intensifies, as Touchstone prepares to dismiss William. Although most critics agree that Touchstone is having fun with the hapless fellow (perhaps with a touch of insensitivity), to an Oxfordian Touchstone appears to be losing his temper. He begins with a short lesson: “To have, is to have. For it is a Figure in Rhetoric, that Drink being powr’d out of

a Cup into a Glass, by filling the one, doth empty the other.” The lesson is certainly an elementary one.<sup>65</sup> Ogburn has noted the “metaphor of the drink . . . as Shakspeare is filled with credit for the plays, Oxford is emptied of it.”<sup>66</sup> It should also be noted that the Folio spelling of “powr’d,” often amended by modern editors to “pour’d,” suggests a play on the words “power” and “pour.” Were the author’s dramatic works being ordered to appear under another’s name?

Touchstone continues with a line that “makes no sense in reference to anything else in the play”<sup>67</sup>—“For all your Writers do consent, that ipse is he: now you are not ipse, for I am he.” Obviously, the line bears scrutiny. First, it is the writers who “consent” (or “agree,” as seems the intended gloss) “that ipse is he.” “Writers” could refer to the ancient Latin writers or to Latin grammarians, but it could also refer to the author’s contemporaries, suggesting that Oxford’s fellow writers knew that he was the true author of the works. Second, it is not quite accurate to say that “ipse is he.” “Ipse” connotes something more than merely “he.” It is “he himself,” or “the emphatic he, the man himself, the very man.”<sup>68</sup> Touchstone concludes the lesson by reminding William that he (William) is “not ipse, for I am he.” Recalling that Touchstone is holding William’s hand, the speech is powerful—even if circumstances have necessitated that the works are to be transferred from Oxford’s name to Shakspeare’s, Oxford’s literary companions—and the Stratford man himself—all know the identity of the true author.

The scene concludes shortly. Poor William does not understand the rhetorical lesson, replying “Which he, Sir?” This reinforces William’s lack of schooling, for he does not recognize a common Latin pronoun. Touchstone answers William’s ignorant question: “He, Sir, that must marry this Woman.” In context, “this Woman,” or Audrey, has to represent the dramatic works, and the use of the word “must” is truly poignant, for we know that the “marriage”—the linking of the correct name to this woman—did not come to pass.

At this point, as Touchstone continues, he begins to grow angry, ordering the “Clown” to “abandon . . . the Society . . . of this Female,” translating his remarks simultaneously into simpler words that Wil-

*(Continued on page 20)*

*As You Like It* (continued from page 19)  
 liam can understand: "leave' . . . the 'Company' of this 'Woman.'" If Touchstone has his way, William's failure to comply will be punishable by death: "I will bandy with thee in Faction, I will o'er-run thee with Policy<sup>69</sup>; I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways, therefore tremble and depart." Kittredge explains the first two phrases: To "bandy with thee in Faction" is to "engage in party strife with thee. To bandy is literally to knock to and fro, like a tennis ball. Faction was constantly used for 'political party' without the modern implication of disorder or sedition." To "o'er-run thee with Policy" is to "outstrip (overcome) thee by means of statecraft. Policy is used in the dignified sense and carries out the threat made in the preceding sense."<sup>70</sup> That Touchstone is here using terms associated with government is surprising; there is no need to resort to statecraft when dealing with a country bumpkin such as William. But if the scene means what we think it does, the choice of words is appropriate, suggesting that Oxford will resist efforts to have the works published under another name, and that he has allies at court who will assist him in his cause. Finally, given the author's frequent precision in use of numerical terms, we can only wonder why Touchstone threatens to kill William exactly "a hundred and fifty ways."

The scene ends. Even William has gotten the message. After a prompt from Audrey ("Do [depart], good William."), he offers a rapid "God rest you merry, Sir," and exits. He does not reappear in the play.

Audrey, however, does reappear twice (in V.iii. & iv.), though she has only one more line. As V.iii. opens, Touchstone announces that they shall be married "tomorrow." Audrey responds happily: "I do desire it with all my Heart; and I hope it is no dishonest Desire to be a Woman of the World?" The usual interpretation of "Woman of the World" is a married woman;<sup>71</sup> the connotation here is that she will be known publicly as having taken the author's name. Audrey concludes her final speech recognizing two minor characters who have just entered: "Here come two of the banish'd Duke's Pages." It may be far-fetched, but it is worth noting that the first recorded use of the word "page" as meaning the "leaf of a book, [or] manuscript" is in 1589!<sup>72</sup>

Touchstone and Audrey resurface in

the play's final scene (V.iv.), as one of the four couples who have gotten together and appear destined for marriage. Introducing himself to Duke Senior, Touchstone says, "I press in here, Sir, amongst the rest of the Country Copulatives to swear and to forswear, according as Marriage binds and Blood breaks." Although the word "copulative" carries a sexual connotation today, in Shakespeare's time its principal connotation was grammatical, as a word which

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served "to couple or connect" other words, or a "copulative" conjunction.<sup>73</sup> Again, the word underscores the personification of the dramatic works as Audrey. Touchstone then describes Audrey to the Duke: "A poor Virgin, Sir, an ill-favour'd thing, Sir, but mine own, a poor Humour of mine, Sir, to take that that no man else will: rich Honesty dwells like a Miser, Sir, in a poor House, as your Pearl in your foul Oyster." Though the description could apply to a homely country lass, the recurrences of "honesty" and "foul" suggest an association with a written work. The phrases "mine own," "a poor humour of mine," and "to take that that no man else will" all suggest ownership.

Later in the scene, Hymen, the marriage god, appears and addresses each of the four couples in turn. To the first three (usually taken as Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia, and Phebe [who is stand-

ing with Silvius]), he offers positive greetings: "You and you no Cross shall part/You and you are Hart in Hart/You to his Love must accord/Or have a Woman to your Lord." But he offers a darker, though still appropriate, greeting to Touchstone and Audrey: "You and you, are sure together/As the Winter to foul Weather."<sup>74</sup> Again, the word "foul" appears, presumably to describe Audrey; as for the comparison of Touchstone to "Winter," Oxfordians have long been aware that the French word for "winter" is "hivve," strongly suggesting a play on the name "E. Vere."

At last, Jaques (who has elected not to return to court, after learning upon the unexpected arrival of the "second brother" that the usurping duke was converted by "an old Religious Man" and abdicated his dukedom) addresses the four couples, mirroring Hymen's comments. To the first three pairs, he wishes well: "You to a Love, that your true Faith doth merit/ You to your Land, and Love, and great Allies/ You to a long, and well-deserved Bed." But to Touchstone and Audrey comes a different kind of wish: "And you to Wrangling, for thy loving Voyage is but for two Months victuall'd." The Stratfordian analysis is that this is "one of those good-humored jests to which men of the world on the eve of marriage must laughingly submit."<sup>75</sup> But to an Oxfordian more seems to have been intended. Why was such a "good-humored jest" made only to Touchstone, and not to any of the other three would-be bridegrooms? Is there significance to the term "two months"? Is it possible that some small window of opportunity, of brief duration, existed within which Oxford might have been able to publish?

Five lines later the play ends, followed by Rosalind's epilogue. Although the weddings of the four couples are imminent, no ceremonies actually occur. It would have been sacrilegious to depict a wedding on stage.<sup>76</sup>

To recap, it appears likely that the characters of Audrey and William, and probably Jaques and Touchstone, were added in 1589 to an already extant version of *As You Like It*. If Jaques and Touchstone represent Oxford, if William represents Shakspeare of Stratford, and if Audrey represents the dramatic works, the implication is that Oxford and Shakspeare were acquainted as early as 1589. Unfortunately, there is little extrinsic evidence to support such a con-

nection. Oxford's exact whereabouts between 1589 and 1592 "remain generally unknown to us."<sup>77</sup> No letters of his are known to exist between 1585 and August 1590.<sup>78</sup> Curiously, however, he writes to Lord Burghley in May 1591 that "I am weary, of an unsettled life, which is the very pestilence that happens unto Courtiers, that propound unto themselves no end of their time, therein bestowed."<sup>79</sup> This suggests that Oxford may have identified closely with Jaques, who is the one central character not to return to court at the end of *As You Like It*. As noted above, Ogburn speculates that Oxford may have spent some of this time at Billesley Hall near Stratford-on-Avon. Even less is known of the whereabouts or activities of Shakespeare of Stratford; the only verifiable fact of his existence between 1585 and 1596 is that in 1589 he and his father were named in legal proceedings concerning his mother's property in Wilmcote.<sup>80</sup>

Whether an opportunity to publish the works actually arose—however tentatively—in 1589 is likewise unknown. The first appearance of the name William Shakespeare as an author is not until 1593, with the publication of the poem *Venus and Adonis*. Although several Shakespeare plays are published during the 1590s, none carries an author's name until 1598, when *Love's Labour's Lost* is published, "Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare." However, Oxfordians have reason to believe that Oxford was known in literary circles as "Willy" in 1590, when Spenser laments in *Tears of the Muses* that "our pleasant Willy" is "dead of late," and "Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell."<sup>81</sup> This reference supports the speculation that Oxford may have been away from court at this time, and further calls to mind Touchstone's remarks that William is a "fair Name" and that "all your Writers do consent, that ipse is he." Oxford may well have used a similar name as early as 1579, when "Willie" participates in a rhyming contest in Spenser's *The Shepherdes Calendar*. As Shakespeare of Stratford was only 15 years old in 1579, it is unlikely that Oxford's choice of name had anything to do with him.

There is ample evidence that *As You Like It* was revised, probably more than once. My conjecture is that one of the author's final touches—probably made after 1598, when the first plays began to

appear under the name of William Shakespeare—was the insertion of a line at II.iv.16. As Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone first enter the forest, Touchstone remarks: "Ay, now am I in Arden, the more Fool I." The standard gloss is that Touchstone means that he is now not just a professional fool, but a true fool, or an even greater fool. But, within the context suggested here, the author is also saying, "Now that my works are to be published under the name of the Arden [Stratford] man, the more people will be deceived."

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### Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> The four titles (*As You Like It*, *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Jonson's Every Man in His Humour*) are listed on a page bearing the date of August 4, but without a year. Based on the order of other entries in the Register, however, scholars agree that the entry was in 1600. There is no reason to doubt this conclusion.
- <sup>2</sup> Kittredge at vii and xvii.
- <sup>3</sup> Ogburn at 714.
- <sup>4</sup> Dover Wilson grounded his theory on what he detected as blank-verse lines contained in prose passages, certain internal inconsistencies, and an allusion to Marlowe's death, which occurred on May 30, 1593. Ward at xi. Kittredge dismisses the theory. Kittredge at vii-viii.
- <sup>5</sup> Brooke at 155.
- <sup>6</sup> Ward at xiv-xv. Prefacing his supposition, Ward states that he is "quite serious."
- <sup>7</sup> The popular novel was reprinted in 1592, 1596 and 1598. Ward at ix.
- <sup>8</sup> Kittredge (at xi) is certain that Lodge had access to a manuscript copy of the fourteenth century work.
- <sup>9</sup> See the Yale Shakespeare edition of *As You Like It* at 119. A more succinct summary is offered by Harold Jenkins: a man dies, leaving three sons, the eldest brother is wicked, the youngest virtuous, and it is he who "wins the princess, herself the victim of a wicked uncle, who has usurped her father's throne." See Halio at 30.
- <sup>10</sup> As Stratfordians hardly need to point out, the Forest of Arden is close to Stratford-on-Avon, the bard's hometown.
- <sup>11</sup> Helen Gardner, "As You Like It," reprinted in Halio at 58.
- <sup>12</sup> Thurber & Wetherbee at 106.
- <sup>13</sup> Jenkins, reprinted in Halio at 28.
- <sup>14</sup> Swinden at 110; Gardner, reprinted in Halio at 56; Ward at xviii.
- <sup>15</sup> Jenkins, reprinted in Halio at 42. See also Swinden at 115.
- <sup>16</sup> Ward at 13.
- <sup>17</sup> Halio at 10.
- <sup>18</sup> What follows in "an" Oxfordian interpretation, not "the" Oxfordian interpretation. In my view too many questions remain unanswered for Oxfordians to share a common view of the play's date(s) of composition, its relationship to Lodge's novel, or the inspiration or prototypes of all the characters.
- <sup>19</sup> Clark at 508-528. Ogburn notes that Stratfordian critic Edward Dowden also dates the play's original composition to 1581, based on the author's style rather than on historical allusions. Ogburn at 714.
- <sup>20</sup> Clark further cites Rosalind's encouragement of Orlando before the wrestling match—"Hercules be thy speed" (I,ii.220)—as an allusion to Alençon's given name: Francois Hercules de Valois. Id. At 518.
- <sup>21</sup> Simier had loaned Alençon 90,000 crowns; poor Adam loans Orlando 500 crowns (II,iii.38-55). Id. At 523.
- <sup>22</sup> In the preface to *Rosalynde*, Lodge offers to the reader, "If you like it, so."
- <sup>23</sup> Ogburn at 714.

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*As You Like It (continued from page 21)*

- <sup>24</sup> Kittredge at ix.
- <sup>25</sup> Paradise at 36-37.
- <sup>26</sup> Smidt at 50.
- <sup>27</sup> This is a much more satisfactory explanation than other theories propounded by Stratfordians – that the playwright forgot he had already used the name Jaques when he came to Act II; or that, as he began to develop the character of Jaques, he decided that the character would “work better” if it were not related to Orlando and Oliver, but somehow inadvertently retained the name for the middle brother. See, e.g., Jenkins, reprinted in Halio at 31; Gardner, reprinted in Halio at 58.
- <sup>28</sup> Ogburn at 715.
- <sup>29</sup> Ogburn at 715. See also Smidt at 196. Oxfordians believe that Oxford coordinated the opposing series of tracts attacking Marprelate. Ogburn at 716.
- <sup>30</sup> Smidt at 53. Smidt also detects a break in III,ii., when Celia changes from “thou” to “you” in addressing Rosalind, as Rosalind changes from “you” to “thou” in addressing Celia, and when the two women switch from mentioning ancient gods to mentioning God. Id. At 53-54.
- <sup>31</sup> Ward at 26.
- <sup>32</sup> Berry at 188.
- <sup>33</sup> The thought has occurred to many, though not all, Stratfordians that the characters (especially Jaques) were taken from real life. Halio (at 18) states that the two are created “out of whole cloth.” Parrott (at 168) observes that “Shakespeare has taken some pains to individualize [Jaques]. He is the traveler returned from the Continent where, presumably he has, like Greene, practiced ‘such a villainy as is abominable to mention’ — the Duke calls him ‘a libertine as sensual as the brutish sting itself’ — and he has come home to sneer at all things English.” Lodge’s biographer, Paradise (at 90), cites Flora Masson’s suggestion that Lodge himself was the source for Jaques, noting that “[h]is melancholy and prevailing mood of discontent, the doleful music of his language, his defense of satire, his medical and nautical figures of speech, and his propensity to travel are all like Lodge.” Dowden’s view that Shakespeare used Jaques to unload “a weight of melancholy from himself” is shared by Ward (at 27). Jenkins, however, finds it “strange” that “some earlier critics should have thought” that Jaques’s “jaundiced view of life . . . might be Shakespeare’s.” Jenkins, reprinted in Halio at 35.
- <sup>34</sup> Jaques’s melancholy is hardly a disabling condition. “[I]t is not the fatigue of spirits of the man who has found the world too much for him, but an active principle manifesting itself in tireless and exuberant antics. Far from being a morose person . . . he throws himself into these things with something akin to passion. His misanthropy is a form of self-indulgence.” Jenkins, reprinted in Halio at 35. In contemporary psychiatric terms, Jaques seems not depressed, but rather manic-depressive.
- <sup>35</sup> Hughes (at 101) also sees a play on “shakes,” the first syllable of the author’s last name, “a self-mocking pun.”
- <sup>36</sup> Ward at 68.
- <sup>37</sup> According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the meaning of “touchstone” as a mineral dates from the 1480s, and as a figurative noun dates from the 1530s.
- <sup>38</sup> Berry at 187, quoting John Dover Wilson’s *Shakespeare’s Happy Comedies*
- <sup>39</sup> In *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Costard the fool is also “taken with a wench.” Kittredge at xiii.
- <sup>40</sup> See, e.g., Halio at 18; Barber, reprinted in Halio at 20-21; Mincoff, reprinted in Halio at 101; Mack, reprinted in Halio at 113.
- <sup>41</sup> Gardner, reprinted in Halio at 58 and 62. See also Berry at 191.
- <sup>42</sup> “The worst side of Touchstone appears in his relation to her, and it was a pity to lower his character. Perhaps Shakespeare felt that Touchstone — who is quite out of place in the forest — needed some pursuit, some amusement to vary a life which bored him; and supplied him with a rustic maid to seduce, and [looking ahead to V,i] a rustic lover to out rival. But the story is quite unnecessary.” Brooke at 172.
- <sup>43</sup> It is derived from Etheldrida. Interestingly, the word “tawdry” is derived from “St. Audrey’s lace,” a form of neckwear worn by women in Elizabethan times.
- <sup>44</sup> The now-obsolete definition of “feature” as “a form, shape or creation” dates to 1483. Oxford English Dictionary.
- <sup>45</sup> Touchstone has been exiled to the forest. Ovid—Shakespeare’s chief classical literary source — “was exiled to live among the Getae (Goths), and complained that his works were not understood by these barbarians.” Everyman Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, at 134.
- <sup>46</sup> “In Book VIII of the *Metamorphoses* Ovid describes a visit by the disguised Jove and Mercury to the cottage of a peasant couple, Philemon and Baucis.” Everyman Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, at 136.
- <sup>47</sup> In III,v.81-82, Celia quotes two lines from Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*, published in 1598. According to Ward (at xi), this “is the only direct allusion to a contemporary’s work in all of Shakespeare.” A further reference to *Hero and Leander* may be lurking in IV,i.107-113.
- <sup>48</sup> At III,iii.32-33 Audrey plays on the words “fair” and “honest” (“Well, I am not fair, and therefore I pray the Gods make me honest”); earlier in the play, Celia has a similar speech (“for those that [Fortune] makes Fair, she scarce makes Honest, and those that she makes Honest, she makes very ill-favouredly”). I.ii.41-43.
- <sup>49</sup> This usage of “foul” dates to the late 1400s. *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- <sup>50</sup> See, e.g., Smidt at 196 (“his name must have invited ridicule and perhaps topical contempt — unless, of course, a Roman Catholic jibe at the Protestant form of marriage is intended”).
- <sup>51</sup> Leggatt at 190.
- <sup>52</sup> Berry at 191; he earlier notes that “sex is quite unsatisfactory as the sole motive for Touchstone’s marriage. The Audreys of the world do not demand a price; the Audrey of this play does not ask it.” Id. at 190.
- <sup>53</sup> Wilson at 156-157.
- <sup>54</sup> Swinden at 115.
- <sup>55</sup> Ward at 68.
- <sup>56</sup> Jenkins, reprinted in Halio at 40.
- <sup>57</sup> Berry at 189.
- <sup>58</sup> Jenkins, reprinted in Halio at 40; Gardner, reprinted in Halio at 57 and 62; Halio at 5.
- <sup>59</sup> Among the few Stratfordians to have considered the obvious connection is Jonathan Bate, who views the scene as an encounter between the fully mature playwright (personified by Touchstone) and his youthful self (William) as he was before he departed Stratford for London.
- <sup>60</sup> Ogburn at 747-749. In addition to William of *As You Like It*, Ogburn notes William Visor, referred to as “an arrant knave,” and William Cook, who lost some “sack . . . the other day at Hinkley Fair,” both mentioned in *2 Henry IV*. The latter play contains two other references to persons named Will or William, both in III,ii — Shallow’s “cousin William is become a good scholar . . . at Oxford”; a few lines later Shallow recalls “Will Squele a Cotswold man.” In *2 Henry VI*, II,iii, drunken Peter Thump, the armourer’s apprentice, gives his hammer to a fellow apprentice named Will. The other non-historical speaking part is William Page (interesting last name!), the youth who is examined in Latin in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; as with the William scene of *As You Like It*, it is a curious sidebar to the play itself. Ogburn also notes that there are no non-historical Edwards in the plays.
- <sup>61</sup> Ogburn at 655.
- <sup>62</sup> Ogburn at 608.
- <sup>63</sup> Ogburn at 529.
- <sup>64</sup> Ogburn at 712-713. “According to a local rumor, *As You Like It* was written in Billesley Hall, a rumor most easily accounted for as having originated in fact.” Id. at 712. By the 1580s Billesley Hall had been owned by the Trussel family (the family of Oxford’s mother) for 400 years. Id.
- <sup>65</sup> “To have, is to have” is, of course, a tautology, as elementary a lesson as can be conceived. Offering an explanation for Touchstone’s choice of lesson, Charles Burford points to the Italian translation of the tautology: “Per avere e di avere.” The reference to “avere” — a Vere — can hardly be coincidental.
- <sup>66</sup> Ogburn at 748; the author notes further that Schoenbaum has treated that hypothesis with “particular scorn.”
- <sup>67</sup> Ogburn at 748.
- <sup>68</sup> Kittredge at 175, citing *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*, published in 1579: “In faith I am Ipse, he even the very same? A man of greate estimation in mine owne country.”
- <sup>69</sup> The Folio word is “Police.”
- <sup>70</sup> Kittredge at 176.
- <sup>71</sup> See, e.g., Kittredge at 180: “To ‘go to the world’ was a common idiom for to ‘get married’ . . . ‘The world’ seems, in these phrases, to be contrasted with a celibate or monastic life.”
- <sup>72</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, citing Nashe.
- <sup>73</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- <sup>74</sup> The Folio spelling is “fowl.”
- <sup>75</sup> Kittredge at 189, quoting Maginn.
- <sup>76</sup> Smidt at 57.
- <sup>77</sup> Ogburn at 712.
- <sup>78</sup> Fowler at 356.
- <sup>79</sup> Fowler at 394-395; Ogburn at 721.
- <sup>80</sup> Ogburn at 26 & 778.
- <sup>81</sup> Ogburn at 719-720.

*Essay contest (cont'd from page one)*

prising even the optimistic expectations of Fellowship Trustees who voted to undertake the initiative a year ago by approving a motion by President Charles Berney to establish the contest: by the end of January 228 essays from 28 states, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Australia had been received in the Fellowship's mailbox. This large number of essays was generated by an advertising budget of less than \$100, based on a pro-rated cost of maintaining a small section of the Fellowship's active and high-profile authorship site to the essay contest.

Despite the modest budget, organizers deemed the contest an outstanding example of the kind of initiatives supported by the Shakespeare Fellowship to stimulate grassroots appreciation for "Shakespeare" and the case for Oxford's authorship of the Shakespearean canon. "Since this was our first-ever essay contest, we didn't know what to expect," said Charles Berney. "By the beginning of January we had received over 50 entries and were pleased with our success. So we were quite unprepared for the flood of essays that poured in at the last minute."

Many of the entries were from individual students. Some were from teachers who had chosen outstanding essays from a class assignment, and some were from teachers who submitted the entire output from their classes. The latter category accounted for the bulk of the entries, which leads us to believe that our contest helped to satisfy a felt need on the part of the teachers, a need to convince their students that literature is worth studying, that there's somebody out in the real world who gives a damn whether they understand Shakespeare's plays.

The judges this year were Charles Berney, Dr. Sarah Smith, another Boston-based Trustee with a Ph.D. in English from Harvard University, and Dr. Roger Stritmatter. Winners were selected in each of the two age divisions (grades 9-10 and 11-12). In addition, judges selected honorable mentions in each category. Teachers who submitted winning entries receive a free one-year subscription to the Fellowship's newsletter, *Shakespeare Matters*.

The variety of essays chosen for awards—ranging from Gary Livacari's (1<sup>st</sup> prize,

upper division) provocative summary of the Oxfordian case, to Dashini Ann Jeyathurai's (2<sup>nd</sup> prize, upper division) essay on the relevance of "Shakespeare" to the 20<sup>th</sup> century—testified to the versatile character of the contest questions and the thoughtful engagement of those questions by students all over the world. With such a variety to choose from, the judges were at a modern banquet of sense in making their selections.



*Grades 9-10 2nd place winner Mark Loftus praised his teacher for emphasizing the importance of studying literature.*

effect on Shakespeare's Works," for example, employs the presumption of the Stratford man's authorship but still demonstrates a masterful awareness of the problem of Shakespeare "in his own time" for a writer of such young years.

Prizewinners were encouraged to acknowledge teachers who had been particularly helpful in the preparation of their essays, and some of the comments were heartwarming to read. Gary Livacari (first prize, 11-12<sup>th</sup> grade) wrote "I would like to mention my British Literature teacher, Mrs. Andrea O'Laughlin. Mrs. O'Laughlin is open-minded on the Shakespeare authorship question and was very supportive of my research paper. She encouraged me to examine the question in detail." Mark Loftus (second prize, 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade) said of his teacher, Mrs. Kelly Courtney-Smith, "She truly understands and believes in the positive impact the study of literature can produce. A student could not ask for a better teacher."

Mentors other than teachers were mentioned: Dashini Ann Jeyathurai (second prize, 11-12<sup>th</sup> grade) wrote "... in my case, it was more my eldest sister Nimmi than anyone else. She enthused about lit-

The judges chose each winning essay on its merits, not on the basis of any preconceptions about whether it gives the "right" answer to the authorship question. Priscilla Mok's 1<sup>st</sup> place entry in the younger division, "The Elizabethan Era's Effect

erature when I was little, in particular Shakespeare, fostering a great fondness for the Bard. She also exposed me to a variety of interpretations of Shakespeare, in the form of Kurosawa's *Ran* (*King Lear* in Japanese) and *Spider Web Castle* (*Macbeth*) as a child. The adaptability of his works make him relevant to every time and every culture."

A new essay contest cycle was enthusiastically approved by the Trustees and a list of essay topics for next year's contest has been posted to the Fellowship's web site.

The essay topic questions for 2003-2004 are:

1. Juliet says that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." How do the names of things or persons affect the outcome of the tragedy?
2. Discuss the problem of mistaken identity in *Twelfth Night*.
3. Consider how knowledge of the author's life and times might affect the process of performing the Shakespearean text.
4. Comment on the symbolic significance of the "little western flower" (II.ii.166) in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.
5. Pick a character from one of the plays and analyze him or her in relation to the life of Edward de Vere or the "Shakespeare" of your choice (i.e. Christopher Marlowe, Francis Bacon, William Shakspeare of Stratford, etc.).
6. Traditionally the central problem of *Hamlet* has been identified as his delay in taking revenge against Claudius. Write an essay exploring the relevance of the play within the play to this problem.
7. Historians identify William Cecil, Lord Burghley, as probably the most powerful man during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603). A long tradition identifies Burghley as the prototype for the character Polonius in *Hamlet*. Explain whether you believe this view is or is not correct. Argue for your position.
8. Discuss the problem of evil in *Macbeth* or *Othello*.

# Book Review

***Shakespeare's Fingerprints.* By Michael Brame and Galina Popova (Adonis Editions, 2002) Hardback \$57.95 from [www.adonis-editions.com](http://www.adonis-editions.com))**

By Roger Stritmatter

From time to time over the course of the historical record of the authorship controversy is published a book which—yet again—is destined to transform our conception of the “myriad-minded” Bard—a book in the tradition including Delia Bacon (1857), J. Thomas Looney (1920), Abel Lefranc (1945), Ogburn and Ogburn (1952) or Ogburn (1984), to name only the most obvious. We know of course that such a man must have been, like Jaques, a traveler. He must, like Prospero, have had access to a plentiful library to feed his voracious mind. He must have taken a special thrill in the symbolic intersection between theatrical disguise and espionage. He must have had a terrible time with his finances. He often provoked uproarious laughter in his friends and acquaintances, so that like his own Falstaff he was one who was “not only witty in himself, but also the cause wit was in other men.” On the other hand, he also understood that words could become swords, with only one letter of difference. If he had any faults, they may have included dressing up in women’s clothing, since of course there was a popular practice of men doing that in a theatrical tradition which still excluded females from participation.

But beyond these bare outlines lies a terra incognita onto which few academic scholars have possessed the temerity to set foot. Beneath them beckons Samuel Schoenbaum’s abyss; the terror of not knowing what they thought they knew wells up inside and they shrink back from questioning—anything at all of consequence—about the bard.

Among other merits, *Shakespeare's Fingerprint* effectively sets forth many of the central reasons why no one with any presumption to cultural awareness will bother to persist much longer in pretending that the Oxford case is maintained only by uneducated zealots who have never set foot within a University. Both authors are practicing professional linguists at the University of Washington in Seattle, and Brame is the founding editor of the presti-

gious journal *Linguistic Analysis*. Even if the book’s methodology is not without some apparent weaknesses which are likely to prove controversial, the authors bring to bear on the subject of the stylometric analysis of Elizabethan texts a level of linguistic sophistication which is unprecedented in the field.

Indeed, while one may safely predict the work’s controversial status, *Shakespeare's Fingerprints* may be the most powerfully dynamic book, in an intellectual sense, ever written in the history of the authorship controversy. The authors are not writing in 1920 when J. Thomas Looney already understood very well that “posterity” was going to ridicule him for his name and hence made sure to attach a precautionary note to the title page: “O god what a wounded name, things standing thus unknown shall live beyond me.”

Those times are no more, one hopes. Brame and Popova are writing within a dynamic intellectual tradition, with many voices—some credible or even gifted, some less so, but always and everywhere a collection of distinctive individuals, brought together by their common fascination about one of the great questions of our time. Already the book has garnished serious attention within the community of linguists who know Brame and Popova’s work on other subjects, creating some intellectual eddies of curiosity in the Oxford case which did not exist before. A recent University of Washington colloquium on the subject drew an attendance of 70, several times the usual number at such events—an experience which is familiar to this reviewer from his own experiences at the University of Massachusetts. Moreover, the authors have made a commitment to the Oxford cause which is by no means exhausted in this book. Two more books are imminent, all self-published by the exquisitely named Adonis Editions (<http://www.adonis-editions.com>). That is an impressive volume of work coming from academicians of whom—up until less than six months ago—the “Oxfordians” had never heard.

Part I of the book comprises an excellent introduction to the authorship question on general principles. The 23 questions set forth by the authors (27-30) pose a formidable challenge to writers of the

orthodox persuasion; one hopes therefore that Brame and Popova’s orthodox critics are prepared to answer all 23 questions before they pursue the familiar strategy of dismissing the entire Oxfordian case based on one or another allegedly erroneous interpretation or method.

The book also includes a superb introduction, the best this reviewer has ever read, of the vexing problem of Shakespeare’s relationship to the “fair youth” of the sonnets. The writers favor the interpretation that the fair youth is the author’s “bastard” son but consider with complete candor the two competing alternatives which immediately suggest themselves to students of the de Vere case: Edward Vere, the son of Anne Vavasour (a theory favored by the late Charles Wisner Barrell) is given ample consideration before Brame and Popova move on to the more controversial, but in most regards more plausible (at least to this reviewer) identification of the fair youth as Henry Wriothesley, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Southampton (c. 1574-1625). In this section Brame and Popova employ an analytic technique which is a breath of fresh air in an intellectual movement which has all-too-often been caught up in its own dogmas. They do their best to present the positive reasons for both theories without arriving at any definitive conclusions in this first book. The trust this method inspires in readers should not be underestimated by other writers covering the same terrain.

But the book is much more than just a sharply written summary of many of the best reasons for doubting the Stratfordian story of authorship and revealing some of the best for Oxford. The authors advocate a bold departure in the study of the English Renaissance, once which places de Vere in a central role as a cultural producer and inspirer who translated or wrote works under as many as 37 names, becoming a virtual Elizabethan Fernando Pessoa (see Alex McNeil, “What’s In a Nym?” *Shakespeare Matters*, Winter 2003, 16-20). Many of these names will be familiar to students of the authorship controversy, who have long suspected, at the very least, Oxford’s close association with the works attributed to George Gascoigne and Arthur Brooke. One early work, *Oxford's Revenge* by Betty Sears and Stephanie Caruana, had



already designated these and a number of others as possible associates who lent their names to Oxford's early productions. Others, such as Edmund Spenser or Christopher Marlowe—whose works this reviewer believes stand on their own and demonstrate in many ways that the names attached to them are not merely convenient covers for the prolific genius who may very well have collaborated with lesser writers like Gascoigne or Turberville—may seem like over-reaching on Brame and Popova's part.

Brame and Popova do, however, make an exciting case, based on both historical and linguistic evidence, that Edward de Vere was responsible not merely for the Shakespearean oeuvre and *Hundredth Sundrie Flowres*, but was the leading mind in a series of cultural productions, many of them translations or transmigrations of books published earlier on the European continent. Familiar names such as George Turberville, George Pettie, George Whetstone, Ignoto, and H.C. Esquire fall like timber before the scythe of the authors' single-minded pursuit of the linguistic traces of Edward de Vere's influence in the literature of England from at least the early 1570s onwards.

Brame and Popova's stylistic "fingerprinting" technique is a refinement of the process inaugurated by J. T. Looney in *"Shakespeare" Identified*, and furthered in William Plumer Fowler's *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters* (1984) of linguistic comparison of de Vere's extant work with the work of "Shakespeare." More specifically, Brame and Popova seek to demonstrate authorial identity by means of semantic, syntactic, or lexical congruences between two or more sets of work (semantics refers to meaning, syntax to the distribution of linguistic elements, and lexical to word identities). An example of how this works may be instructive:

Ignoto:

True is my love, and true shall ever be,  
And truest love is far too base for thee.  
(*England's Helicon*, 211)

Shakespeare:

This I do vow, and this shall ever be,  
I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee  
(Sonnet 123, 13-4)  
(=Lex-6, =Syn, =Rime)

This comparison between the pseudonymous writer Ignoto from *England's Helicon* (1600) and Shakespeare's Sonnet 123 illustrates that the two short passages

contain six items of lexical identity (=Lex-6). One of these is "and," which doesn't count for much, but the other five items will leave an indelible mark on the mind of a sensitive reader.

Moreover, linguists study more than just the lexical level of word identity. The authors also note that the passages share a common syntax (=Syn). Both contain oaths ending in the first line phrase "shall ever be." Finally, the rhyme scheme is identical; both couplets rhyme "be" with "thee"

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**"Shakespeare's Finger-  
prints has much to  
teach anyone. The  
elegant construction  
of the arguments  
for Oxford's authorship  
of 'Shakespeare' alone ...  
make it an exceedingly  
worthwhile book"**

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(=Rime). The cumulative impression of authorial identity is impressive, at least from this one specimen. "These twin couplets confront orthodoxy with a vexing question that cannot be easily dismissed by the all-too-common resort to commonplace," write Brame and Popova with good reason. "Indeed, one obvious question that crowds in on the serious investigator of Elizabethan literature is the following: Ignoto Question: Why do we find so much similarity between the poetry of Ignoto and that of Shakespeare?" (273).

Brame and Popova are in the habit of tossing out questions of this sort which seem destined to vex congenitally orthodox readers for many decades to come. Even the most zealous of orthodox scholars, reading with a predetermination to discredit the work, must concede that the authors have completely changed the intellectual landscape within which Renaissance authorship studies functions, by calling attention to the prominent practice of using pseudonyms and fronts during the early modern period, and by pioneering a detailed mode of linguistic analysis which

purports to "fingerprint" a given author. How is it possible, for example, that a poet of the caliber of "Ignoto," who clearly wrote some of the best lyric poetry of the era, could for so long remain unresolved? Or that the close affinity of thought and style between "Ignoto," "Shakespeare" and "de Vere" could for so long remain suppressed by mainstream academicians despite the fact that J. Thomas Looney claimed Ignoto's lyrics for de Vere as long ago as 1930 in his issue of *The Poems of Edward de Vere*<sup>1</sup>:

There is a distinctiveness of these 'Ignoto' poems which marks the work as a whole as the production mainly of one writer, the name 'Ignoto' indicating not merely anonymity, but rather one definite concealed personality. These poems link the early De Vere poetry and the later Shakespearean work.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to say, as already indicated, that this reviewer can agree with all of Brame and Popova's hypotheses. One can be impressed by the scholarship and gratified by the brilliance of the book without conceding that the methodology is free from potential objections.

The most obvious and important objection is that the methodology may be testing for networks of influence and not individual writers. Who is to say how powerful the influence of writers such as Edward de Vere, John Lyly or Thomas Nashe, for example, may have been on their contemporaries? The authors correctly criticize orthodox scholars for hiding behind the fig-leaf of the "commonplace" whenever two passages from ostensibly different writers share many features. They are right that many of the examples cited in their book seem unlikely candidates for such a facile categorization. But their own method may suffer from the contrary defect of not taking seriously enough the problem of false positives. Nowhere does the book address the critical question of the density of "fingerprints" connecting any given set of authors or the potential for false positives which is inherent in such techniques.

Many potential objections could therefore be raised to positive identifications based solely, or at least primarily, on their fingerprinting technique as employed in this book. For example, Brame and Popova's enthusiasm to sweep up Marlowe and Spenser in the same linguistic net as Gascoigne, Brooke,  
(Continued on page 32)

*A year in the life*

By Hank Whittemore

## 1597: Islands Voyage &amp; Isle of Dogs

Few historical documents shed light on Edward de Vere's activities in 1597. In the previous year Oxford and his Countess moved into a house she had bought in Hackney, a suburb north of London; and as Charlton Ogburn, Jr. writes: "The obscurity that would surround his life here, where he would remain as long as he lived, is almost impenetrable."<sup>1</sup>

We may imagine Oxford at King's Place in relatively settled tranquility, perhaps still visiting with his son-in-law the Earl of Derby, as he did the year before. Meanwhile events in the world of London theaters (as well as in the Anglo-Spanish war) were hardly serene; and we may also imagine the Lord Great Chamberlain taking keen personal interest in these events, to the point of trying to influence them with his pen from behind the scenes.

"In 1597 began the printing of plays written by Shakespeare for (the Lord Chamberlain's Men), with a 'bad' quarto of *Romeo and Juliet*, bearing on its title-page the name of Lord Hundson's men and 'good' quartos of *Richard II* and *Richard III*, bearing that of the Lord Chamberlain's. From the text of *Richard II* was omitted the deposition scene, which did not appear in print until after the death of Elizabeth."<sup>2</sup>

- E. K. Chambers<sup>2</sup>

But no author was attached to those plays. "William Shakespeare" had appeared on the dedications of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and *Lucrece* in 1594 to Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, but nowhere had that already-famous name landed on the title page of a published play.<sup>3</sup> (In our own time it would be as though Norman Mailer was writing smash hits for the Broadway stage without anyone knowing about it.) Going by the record, the Elizabethan public in 1597 remained unaware that the sophisticated creator of two best-selling narrative poems was also the popular dramatist of the Chamberlain's Men.

Since the death in August 1596 of elderly Lord Chamberlain Henry Carey, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Hundson and the Queen's first cousin (or half-brother), Shakespeare's company had

been under the patronage of his son George Carey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Hundson. The title of Lord Chamberlain, however, had been transferred to William Brooke, Lord Cobham, a descendant of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century soldier Sir John Oldcastle—the name of the beloved character in *Henry IV, Pts. 1 & 2*, which would be produced this year to rousing acclaim on the public stage.<sup>4</sup>

**January 1:** The Chamberlain's Men perform at Court, "Thomas Pope & John Hemynges servauntes to the Lord Chamberleyne." (Play unrecorded.) This is the first of four productions by the company during the year for Her Majesty and her Court, probably with Richard Burbage playing Romeo and Richard III among other unprecedented roles. It is difficult if not impossible to imagine that Queen Elizabeth, as well as the illustrious members of her audience, do not know precisely who wrote these plays.

**January 6:** The Chamberlain's Men perform at Court. (Same payees, play unrecorded.)<sup>5</sup> One of the plays this season could be *The Merchant of Venice*, with its topical allusion to Essex's victory at Cadiz last year. If traditional scholars are correct, it means that Oxford has recently inserted an allusion to the capture of the Spanish ship *St. Andrew*:

And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand<sup>6</sup> (*MOV*, I.i.27)

**January 11:** Oxford writes to his brother-in-law, Robert Cecil, who, the previous July, became both Principal Secretary and leader of the Privy Council. For two years now Oxford has addressed business matters not to his father-in-law William Cecil, Lord Treasurer Burghley, but rather to Robert, indicating the shift in government control from father to son has already occurred. Part of the reason is that Burghley has been in ill health, but as Robert Lacey writes:

After waiting patiently for five years, old Burghley had achieved his last great ambition: to see his quiet, crippled, brilliant son take over the reins of effective power. The old man could die content. His boy Robert

would still have to struggle with that other Robert, Earl of Essex, so much nobler born and so generously endowed with the superficial attractions that counted for so much at the Elizabethan Court. Yet as Principal Secretary to the Queen young Cecil was undeniably established – he could hold his own alone against Essex; and given time he could do more than that.<sup>7</sup>

Oxford complains to Cecil about a financial matter he calls "such a trifle" that he would prefer to talk about it further in person. The dealings involve a Thomas Gurley in regard to a five-year-old matter of 300 pounds; Gurley is now trying to get 140 pounds from Oxford's second wife Elizabeth Trentham. Angered over this "wrong" done to her, Oxford blurts out: "But his shifts and knaveries are so gross and palpable, that doubting to bring his parts and jugglings to light, he doth address his petition against her that is utterly ignorant of the cause."<sup>8</sup>

**January:** The Essays of Francis Bacon, revolutionary in form and style as well as content, are published for the first time.

**February 6:** The Chamberlain's Men perform at Court.

**February 8:** The Chamberlain's Men perform at Court.

**February:** James Burbage, co-builder in 1576 of the Theatre, the first regular public playhouse, dies at 67. Burbage acquired the Blackfriars priory in 1596, intending to create a private theater. His sons Richard and Cuthbert, who will realize that plan, now also inherit the building of the Theatre and will use its lumber to erect the Globe on Bankside in 1599. Richard Burbage is already the lead actor of the Chamberlain's Men, since its formation in 1594, and will continue as such in the next reign with the King's Men.<sup>9</sup>

**February 11:** The Queen and her favorite, Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, get into a flaming disagreement and the earl retires in a huff to his bed. Essex, because of his triumph at Cadiz the previous year, "now dominated both Queen and Council and was energetically involved in every aspect of state policy," writes Alison

Weir. "The public regarded him with adulation as a near-legendary hero, and crowds gathered whenever he appeared."<sup>10</sup>

**February 21:** Francis Langley signs a contract with the Pembroke's Men to play at the Swan playhouse for a full year.<sup>11</sup>

**February 25:** "Full fourteen days hath my Lord of Essex hath kept his chamber," writes the Court observer Roland Whyte. "Her Majesty has, I heard, resolved to break him of his will and pull down his great heart." Elizabeth finally visits him, however, and he recovers.

**March 5:** Lord Cobham dies and his son Henry Brooke becomes the 8<sup>th</sup> Lord Cobham, who happens to be an archenemy of Essex. At some point this year, perhaps because of previous complaints from his father and now from his son, the name of the larger-than-life figure in the *Henry IV* plays will be changed from Sir John Oldcastle to Sir John Falstaff.

**March 17:** George Carey, son of the late Henry Carey, Lord Hundson, is appointed Lord Chamberlain of England. Hundson's Men once again become known as the Chamberlain's Men.

**Spring:** Ben Jonson begins collaborating with Thomas Nashe on the latter's comedy, *Isle of Dogs*, for the Pembroke's Men.<sup>12</sup> But exactly under what circumstances these two men began working together is unknown.

**April:** Walter Raleigh, Robert Cecil and Essex dine together in a show of peace.<sup>13</sup> This month the Privy Council is engaged in active preparations to attack the Spanish before Philip can launch another Armada to invade England.

**May 4:** "Williellm Shakespeare" purchases New Place, second largest house in Stratford upon Avon, for 60 pounds.

**May:** Essex is appointed to lead the expedition against the Spanish.

**June 15:** Instructions drawn for Essex are that he is to attack the Spanish fleet and destroy it in harbor, or, if it's at sea, to pursue and destroy it. After that he is to intercept and capture Spanish treasure ships

**July 6:** Walter Raleigh writes to Robert Cecil that Essex is "wonderful merry at your conceit of Richard II."<sup>14</sup> Cecil may have attended a performance of this play, either at Court or in a private setting (or read the newly printed text) and expressed his reaction to Raleigh – who, in turn, conveyed it to Essex. We can only imagine what Cecil

thinks of *Richard II*, in which Edward de Vere has depicted the deposition of an English monarch by Bolinbroke, who then became King Henry IV.

"Essex himself was known to enjoy the play," biographer Lacey writes, "going several times and applauding enthusiastically."<sup>15</sup>

After the Essex Rebellion of 1601, for which the conspirators will arrange for a special performance of *Richard II* at the

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*"Walter Raleigh*

*writes to Robert*

*Cecil that Essex is*

*'wonderful merry*

*at your conceit*

*of Richard II."*

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Nashe was 'terrified'*

*by the finished product*

*[i.e., Isle of Dogs],*

*to the point that*

*he was 'glad to run*

*from it' to Yarmouth..."*

---

Globe, Cecil will accuse Essex of having wanted to make himself king from 1596 onward. In the Secretary's mind, therefore, the Queen's favorite in 1597 is an embodiment of Bolingbroke the usurper. On the other hand, his actual response to the play is undocumented; and he may well take greater offense at *Richard III*, with its dramatic portrayal of a hunchbacked royal criminal whose Machiavellian, pragmatic tyranny is free of any moral restraints – a depiction that, some historians believe, accurately fits Cecil himself.

**July 10:** The English fleet sets sail from Plymouth on the ill-fated "Islands Voyage"

to the Azores in an attempt to intercept Spanish ships heading in convoy from Havana with American gold and silver to be delivered to King Philip. Essex is commander-in-chief with his flagship *Merhonour* and six warships of the Royal Navy, plus six armed merchantmen and six transports. Vice-admiral Lord Thomas Howard and Walter Raleigh are each commanding their own squadrons, with a Dutch squadron along as well. A rough estimate would be 29 warships among more than 100 vessels carrying 5,000 soldiers, among them 1,000 veterans under Oxford's cousin Sir Francis Vere. Some 500 lords, knights and gentlemen have signed up as volunteers, among them Southampton, in command of the *Garland*.<sup>16</sup>

Also on the expedition is poet John Donne, who will write of the various tempests at sea that caused great sea-sickness among the men: "Some coffin'd in their cabins lye, equally/ Griev'd that they are not dead..."<sup>17</sup>

**July 22:** Philip Henslowe notes in his diary that Ben Jonson is working as both a "player" and a playwright for the Admiral's Men.<sup>18</sup> Apparently *Isle of Dogs* has been completed and is being readied for performance by the Pembroke's Men.

**July 25:** Elizabeth responds to a Latin speech by the Polish ambassador by replying in Latin *ex tempore* with a speech of her own—to the marvel of the entire Court, including Robert Cecil. The Queen then turns to her noble audience and exclaims, "God's death, my Lords, I have been enforced this day to scour up my old Latin that hath been long a-rusting!"<sup>19</sup>

**July 28:** Henslowe records advancing four pounds to "Bengemen Johnson player" while also noting that Jonson has repaid other money owed in the sum of three shillings nine pence.<sup>20</sup> (It is unclear whether this notation is the same one indicated for July 22<sup>nd</sup> above.)

**July 28:** On or before this day, the Pembroke's Men perform *Isle of Dogs* at the Swan.<sup>21</sup> The Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London request the Privy Council to issue orders for the "final suppressing" of stage plays in and about the city.<sup>22</sup> Also on the same day the Privy Council directs that "no plays shall be used within London or about the city or in any public place during this time of summer." In addition "those playhouses that are erected and built only for

*(Continued on page 28)*

*Year in the life (continued from page 27)*

such purposes shall be plucked down, namely the Curtain and the Theatre near to Shoreditch or any other within that county."<sup>23</sup>

**July 31:** The entire English fleet is now back in Plymouth harbor for repair of damages done to the ships by storms. Among the captains returning today is Southampton, who had been ordered home despite his wish to engage the Spanish.<sup>24</sup>

**August:** All playhouses remain shut down for business this month.

**August 15:** The Privy Council indicates that prisoners have been rounded up in the *Isle of Dogs* scandal. Later on Nashe will write: "I having but begun the induction and the first act of it, the other four acts without my consent or the least drift of my drift or scope, by the players were supplied, which bred both their trouble and mine, too." Nashe was "terrified" by the finished product, to the point that he was "glad to run from it" to Yarmouth, where he has now begun a year in seclusion.<sup>25</sup>

The Council sends instructions to its agents, among them the infamous interrogator Richard Topcliffe at the Marshalsea prison:

Upon information given us of a lewd play that was played in one of the playhouses on the Bankside, containing very seditious and slanderous matter, we caused some of the players to be apprehended and committed to prison, whereof one of them was not only an actor but a maker of part of the said play. (Gabriel Spencer and Robert Shaa, lead Pembroke actors, along with 24-year-old Ben Jonson.) For as much as it is thought meet that the rest of the players or actors in that matter shall be apprehended to receive such punishment as their lewd and mutinous behavior doth deserve, these shall be therefore to require you to examine those of the players that are committed, whose names are known to you, Mr. Topcliffe...

The Council wants to learn "what is become of the rest of their fellows that either had their parts in the devising of that seditious matter or that were actors or players" in *Isle of Dogs*, as well as "what copies they have given forth of the said play and to whom." Also they should "peruse such papers as were found in Nash his lodgings" and to "certify us the examinations you

take."<sup>26</sup>

In the Marshalsea with Jonson, Spencer and Shaa is Henry Parrot, a professional agent working for Secretary Robert Cecil, who had been planted there to spy on the imprisoned Jesuit priest Father Barkworth.<sup>27</sup> Much later Jonson will say the authorities "could get nothing of him to all their demands but 'aye' and 'no'." He will recall that they placed "two damned villains" in the prison "to catch advantage of him," but he was "advertised" or warned of their presence "by his keeper."<sup>28</sup> In a later poem about government informants, Jonson will write that "we will have no Pooily or Parrot" for company, apparently referring not only to Henry Parrot but also to Robert Poley, another professional spy, who had been at Deptford in May 1593 when Christopher Marlowe was killed.

Jonson's imprisonment continues through August.

**August 17:** Essex commands a smaller English fleet setting forth to find the Spanish ships.

**September:** Playhouses remain closed by the government this month. Ben Jonson is still confined in the Marshalsea all this month as well.

**September 8:** Oxford lends support to the proposed marriage of his 13-year-old daughter Bridget Vere to William Herbert, 17, eldest son of the Earl and Countess of Pembroke (Mary Sidney). He writes to Burghley, the girl's grandfather and guardian, that the match "doth greatly content me for Bridget's sake, whom always I have wished a good husband such as your Lordship and myself may take comfort by." With all the adults in agreement, Oxford adds that "I know no reason to delay it but according to their desires, to accomplish it with convenient speed ... for the young gentleman, as I understand, hath been well brought up, fair conditioned, and hath many good parts in him."<sup>29</sup>

Oxford tells Burghley before signing off, "I am sorry that I have not an able body which might have served to attend on Her Majesty in the place where she is..."<sup>30</sup>

**October:** Playhouses remain closed by the government. Jonson is still in prison.

**October 8:** The Privy Council instructs the Keeper of the Marshalsea "to release Gabriel Spencer and Robert Shaa, stage-players, out of prison" and to follow "the like warrant for the releasing of Benjamin Johnson."<sup>31</sup> Now Henslowe, business man-

ager of the Admiral's Men who perform at the Rose on South Bank, enters into business arrangements with several members of Pembroke's Men including Jonson, thereby crippling that rival company.

**October 13:** Philip of Spain, learning that Essex's fleet is near the Azores, orders his Armada to sail with 140 great galleons heading toward Falmouth.

**October 15:** The English fleet is on its way home again, having accomplished very little. The Spanish fleet is hoping to intercept and destroy it, while southern England is placed on a state of alert and readiness to repel the invasion<sup>32</sup> (The Spanish fleet will be wrecked by storms.)

**October 24:** The Queen is conducted from Whitehall to Westminster to open a new assemblage of Parliament. Southampton attends his first session in the House of Lords; but Essex, smarting under the Queen's criticism for failing either to destroy the Spanish fleet or to capture Spanish treasure, refuses to take his seat.<sup>33</sup> Instead, claiming sickness, he has removed himself to the countryside. (Southampton had proved himself stubborn and courageous in the face of all the various troubles; and despite the failure of the expedition, he had managed to sink one Spanish ship and to gain the admiration of others on the Islands Voyage.)

**November 1:** The inhibition of theaters is lifted. As performances resume, the Queen's Master of the Revels issues licenses to the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the Lord Admiral's Men, the two companies that wear the livery of her Privy Councilors. While responsible to the ministers of state, they now enjoy the status of a protected monopoly (or duopoly). No license is issued to Pembroke's Men; and the Swan, owned by Langley, is doomed as a venue for plays.

Robert Cecil, having become Secretary of State, has gained unprecedented control of the London theater world via the Privy Council and the creation of a duopoly of companies beholden to the Council. He has also come into contact with Ben Jonson, through interrogator Topcliffe. Ironically, given the explosion caused by *Isle of Dogs*, the skyrocketing of Jonson's career now begins; and *Every Man In His Humour* will be presented by the Chamberlain's Men in the fall of 1598. In the ensuing years, especially in those of the next reign, Jonson will be beholden to Cecil in many ways while

becoming closely allied with Oxford's relatives, especially Susan Vere.

**November 2:** William Shackspere is listed on the Subsidy Rolls as a tax defaulter in Bishopgate, having failed to pay an assessed five shillings.<sup>34</sup>

**November 17:** Accession Day festivities are held. The Queen has ruled, with Burghley as the architect of her policies, for 39 years. When Essex fails to appear, the chief minister writes to the earl to remind him the celebration had marked the start of Elizabeth's fortieth year on the throne.<sup>35</sup>

**December 3:** Henslowe advances 20 shillings to Ben Jonson "upon a book which he showed the plot unto the company which he promised to deliver at Christmas next."<sup>36</sup>

**December 15:** Andre Hurault, Sieur de Maise, a special envoy sent by King Henry IV of France, meets with Elizabeth for the second time this month. His mission concerns a possible peace among France, Spain and England; but the Queen will have none of it, since she believes Philip of Spain will attempt to invade again. Elizabeth embarrasses the French ambassador by wearing a gown of Italian style silver gauze and exposing "the whole of her bosom" during the two-hour interview.<sup>37</sup>

**December 26:** The Chamberlain's Men perform at Court.

**December 28:** The Queen mollifies Essex by appointing him Earl Marshal of England, an office in abeyance since the execution of Norfolk in 1572, a quarter-century earlier. The proud earl immediately returns in order to show himself in public. Now, in earnest, begins the end game of the power struggle between Essex and Robert Cecil, aiming toward control over the succession to Elizabeth's throne. Stage works by the unseen "Shakespeare" will be part of this contemporary political history as well.

After the dust kicked up by *Isle of Dogs* had settled back down, David Riggs writes, "the main beneficiaries turned out to be the Queen and her Privy Council and the two companies that her councilors patronized." The events of 1597 had marked a "watershed" in the history of the English stage, concludes Glynne Wickham; and Riggs adds: "Previously the theater business was fundamentally independent in character. Henceforth the Court would increasingly make it an object of scrutiny, patronage and control."<sup>38</sup>

Whatever the true story behind *Isle of Dogs*, the play had crossed some line in

terms of provoking the Elizabethan government. It had caused Robert Cecil and the Privy Council to charge attempted sedition by means of a performance on the stage, that is, attempted incitement of rebellion against the Crown. What happened in the summer of 1597 would culminate three and one-half years later—on February 7, 1601—in a special performance by the Chamberlain's Men of Shakespeare's *Richard II* at the Globe. This time the political purpose of staging a play would be transparent. This time supporters of Essex and Southampton would arrange for the production to rouse support against Secretary Cecil and his sway over the Queen; and the so-called Essex Rebellion would begin the next morning.

What's clear is that, in 1597, politics and theater in England became interconnected as never before. And while the man who was "Shakespeare" remained behind the scenes, leaving so little trace in the record, his influence upon contemporary history nonetheless continued. Still to be comprehended, of course, is what Edward de Vere actually intended and why.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, 1992), 742

<sup>2</sup> Chambers, E. K., *Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), his section "The Adult Companies," 196

<sup>3</sup> The first printed plays with the Shakespeare name will appear next year, in 1598, with Q2 *Richard III* ("William Shake-speare"); Q1 *Love's Labour's Lost* ("W. Shake-speare") and Q2 & Q3 *Richard II* ("William Shake-speare")

<sup>4</sup> Chambers, op. cit., 196; (An ancestress of Lord Cobham had been married to Oldcastle.)

<sup>5</sup> Chambers, op. cit., Appendix B (Revels Accounts recorded November 27, 1597)

<sup>6</sup> Campbell, James Oscar, *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare* (New York: MJF Book, 1966), 522

<sup>7</sup> Lacey, Robert, *Robert Earl of Essex* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 168

<sup>8</sup> Chiljan, Katherine, *Letters and Poems of Edward, Earl of Oxford* (copyright 1998), 58-61; Fowler (The letter involves one Thomas Gurley and another man, Sir Thomas Shirley)

<sup>9</sup> Campbell, op. cit., 88-89 Co-builder of the Theatre with James Burbage was his brother-in-law John Brayne. (Among Richard Burbage's famous roles are Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy* as well

as *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello*. Some believe he also played Faulconbridge, the Bastard in *King John*.)

<sup>10</sup> Weir, Alison, *The Life of Elizabeth I* (New York: Ballantine, 1998), 425

<sup>11</sup> Campbell, op. cit., 448

<sup>12</sup> Riggs, David, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 32

<sup>13</sup> Read, Conyers, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 533

<sup>14</sup> Chambers, op. cit., 196 (footnote)

<sup>15</sup> Lacey, op. cit., 209

<sup>16</sup> Akrigg, G. P. V. *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 60

<sup>17</sup> The Storme, 11.44-49; cited by Akrigg, op. cit., 61

<sup>18</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB), Ben Jonson, 1070

<sup>19</sup> Read, op. cit., 529

<sup>20</sup> Brock, D. Heyward, *A Ben Jonson Companion* (Indiana University Press, 1983) 137; Riggs, op. cit., 34

<sup>21</sup> Adams, J. Q., *A Life of William Shakespeare* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), 269

<sup>22</sup> Riggs, op. cit., 33

<sup>23</sup> Chambers, op. cit., "Documents of Control," 323

<sup>24</sup> Akrigg, op. cit., 62

<sup>25</sup> Nashe in *Lenten Stuff*, 1599; in McKerrow, R.B., *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (Oxford, 1904-10), vol. 3, 154

<sup>26</sup> Chambers, op. cit., "Documents of Control", 323 (1597, Aug. 15, Privy Council Minutes); spelling modernized for this article; Riggs, op. cit., 33

<sup>27</sup> Phillips, Graham, and Keatman, Martin, *The Shakespeare Conspiracy* (London: Arrow Books, 1994), 179

<sup>28</sup> Riggs, op. cit., 33

<sup>29</sup> Chiljan, op. cit., 62; (William Herbert will not marry Bridget Vere, but his brother Philip Herbert will marry Susan Vere in December 1604; and the two brothers will be "the incomparable pair" who apparently finance the first Folio of Shakespeare plays in 1623)

<sup>30</sup> Oxford had been lamed in a duel in 1582, but the reason for his lack of an "able body" is unclear

<sup>31</sup> Chambers, op. cit., 323

<sup>32</sup> Weir, op. cit., 428

<sup>33</sup> Read, op. cit., 535

<sup>34</sup> Cited by Mark Alexander's website at <http://www.sourcetext.com>; Subsidy Roll, E. 179/146/354

<sup>35</sup> Weir, op. cit., 430

<sup>36</sup> *DNB* on Ben Jonson

<sup>37</sup> Weir, op. cit., 431

<sup>38</sup> Riggs, op. cit., 33-34, (He cites "Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages: 1300-1660*, vol. 2, part II; London, 1972, 9-29)

*Confidential Video Bard*

## Three Lears: Hordern, Holm, and Olivier

By Chuck Berney

Among all the Shakespeare plays available on video, perhaps none offers the viewer more choices than *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. These are the landmark plays in the Shakespeare canon, and of course playing Lear or Hamlet is often a defining moment in an actor's career. Six *Lear*'s are currently available through the Poor Yorick internet site, ranging from Ian Holm's recent Royal National Theatre performance to old standbys such as Orson Welles or Laurence Olivier, or less well-known performances from Burgess Meredith, Patrick Magee or Mike Kellen. The BBC's early 1980s version with Michael Hordern (currently only available through libraries) is a seventh version which will soon be available for sale to the general public. For this edition of Confidential Video Bard we will look at just three of these Lears: Michael Hordern, Ian Holm, and Laurence Olivier.

**Michael Hordern**

Jonathan Miller is a British director who was trained as a physician, then entered show business as one-fourth of a troupe performing a collection of irreverent skits called *Beyond the Fringe* (the other members were Alan Bennett, Dudley Moore, and Peter Cook). In 1979 he became executive producer of the BBC's ongoing video productions of the Shakespeare plays, and in 1982 he directed their version of *King Lear*.

I don't know if Miller has a curl in the middle of his forehead, but when he's good (*Taming of the Shrew*) he's very good, and when he's bad, he's horrid. Unfortunately, the latter is the case with *Lear*.

The problems begin with his casting Michael Hordern in the title role. Hordern has had a long movie career (he played Senex in the film version of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*) and has been a frequent performer in the BBC films. The problem is his appearance. With a lined, puffy face and receding hair and chin, he looks like a disgruntled grocer.

When you see him saying lines like "Come not between the dragon and his wrath" or "Ay, every inch a king," cognitive dissonance sets in. Senex, yes—Lear, no.

Another problem is that Miller has a pet theory about the Fool. He writes in his memoir, *Subsequent Performances*, "I have never been tempted to see the Fool as anything other than an old man, Lear's contemporary, and a broken-down rather insufferable clown. He comes closer to Lear than anyone and this is not because he is a young, charming, soft, capering goat but due to his age and performance, which is rather like an old music-hall comic . . ." Miller seems to believe that there are only two choices possible when casting the Fool—a broken-down clown or a young capering goat. My own perspective on the Fool comes from association with several productions of Gilbert & Sullivan's *Yeomen of the Guard*, whose central character is a professional jester. Much of the dialog and several of the songs in this piece deal with the difficulties of being a professional comic, emphasizing the training, talent and discipline required (this, of course, is true of music-hall comics as well). In line with his Fool theory, Miller selected an actor (Frank Middlemass) who looks like Hordern's twin brother. His profession is indicated by grimy smudges of grease-paint on his face; other than that, there is no trace of training or talent—he comes off as simply annoying. It's a remake of *Grumpy Old Men*.

**Ian Holm**

A more recent version of *King Lear* was shown on PBS stations in 1998 and is available as a video. Directed by Richard Eyre and starring Ian Holm, it is based on a stage production by the Royal National Theatre. Holm came to prominence in 1966, playing the menacing pimp Lennie in Pinter's *The Homecoming*. In 1968 he played Puck in Peter Hall's production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the video of which was reviewed in the *Shakespeare*

*Oxford Newsletter* for Spring 2001. Edginess and menace come easily to Holm, so it is natural that he should fall into the Anger Trap—that is, if you're playing Lear and you start out angry, you've got nothing but anger to play until you go mad.

It's tempting to describe this production as Lear 101, suitable for beginners. You know Regan is up to no good because she's bleached her hair. You know Edmund's the bad guy because he wears black leather, has beady eyes and an Alcatraz haircut. You *don't* know it from his wonderful "Thou, Nature, art my goddess" speech because that has been cut, with parts of it redistributed as voice-overs in other scenes.

Eyre apparently subscribes to Miller's Fool theory, as he has cast an older actor (Michael Bryant) who, with his white beard and peaked cap looks like a lawn ornament, a garden gnome come to life. However, there is a rapport between him and Holm; one can believe that their relationship is long-lived—the acting rescues the directorial concept. In fact, that is true of the whole production: in spite of some mistaken choices, the talent of the actors saves it. The "sharper than a serpent's tooth" scene between Lear and Goneril (Barbara Flynn), for example, is heart-wrenching.

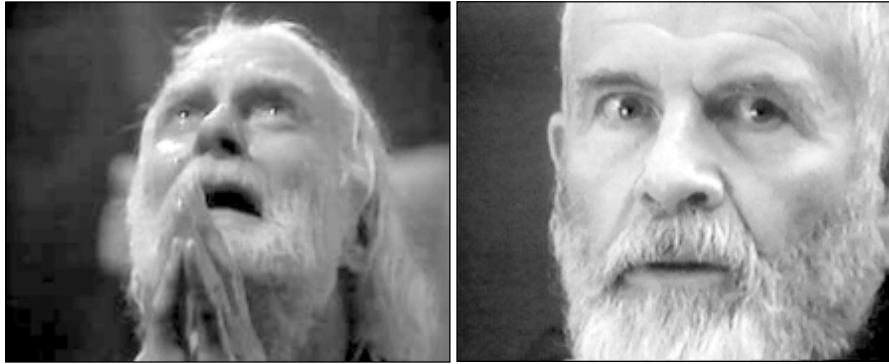
**Laurence Olivier**

The Laurence Olivier version, produced for television and directed by Michael Elliott, was released in 1983. If the Eyre-Holm version is Lear 101, this is the master class—instead of "good" characters and "bad" characters, we have nuanced, three-dimensional human beings. This is made evident in the very first scene, between Gloucester, Kent and Edmund. The latter is played by Robert Lindsay, a frequent performer in the BBC series who can do either "good" (Benedick) or "bad" (Iachimo in *Cymbeline*). Gloucester is played by Leo McKern (*Rumpole of the Bailey*). When I saw Gloucester, with his potato face and cunning, pig-like eyes tell-

ing Kent (in effect) “This is my bastard son—it was lots of fun screwing his mother,” I gasped at his callousness, and started to understand where Edmund was coming from.

Olivier is far too canny to fall into the Anger Trap. His Lear is initially all sweetness and solicitude. He smacks his lips in pleasurable anticipation of Cordelia’s expression of her love for him. When she is asked “What can you say to draw a third more opulent than your sisters?” and says “Nothing,” most Lears bark out “Nothing will come of nothing” as a rebuke. Olivier says it in a gentle, wheedling tone, as if he were explaining the rules of the game to a child. His anger when Cordelia refuses to play the game is initially tentative until Kent jumps in: “What wouldst thou do, old man?” Then it explodes. This is the first version of *Lear* I’ve seen where the opening scene is convincing and moving, rather than simply establishing the premise for the rest of the action.

Even aside from Olivier, the cast is packed with great actors. Diana Rigg moves with feline grace and brings out a subtle comic side to Regan; her delivery of “he



Among the many Lears that Oxfordian videophiles can treat themselves to are the classic Laurence Olivier (left), or the more recent Ian Holm (right).

hath ever but slenderly known himself” is alone worth the price of admission. And in John Hurt we at last have a Fool with the smack of professionalism about him (Hurt achieved cinematic immortality by giving thoracic birth to a monster in the 1979 film *Alien*). Hurt miraculously avoids giving us either a broken-down clown or a capering young goat, but gives us instead a sensitive human being, deeply attached to Lear, who indeed “hath much pined away.” Hurt does with the Fool’s chiding what Olivier did with “Nothing will come of nothing” in the preceding scene; he makes it seem more like affectionate teaching than a rebuke.

What struck me after watching this *Lear* was the extent to which the “good” characters precipitate the catastrophes that befall them (they don’t deserve these catastrophes, but as Clint Eastwood observes in

*Measure*. And, of course, Lear himself is the prime example.

Part of the enormous power of Shakespeare’s plays is their resonance with the life of their creator, Edward de Vere. And part of the emotion with which this great version of *Lear* is charged comes from its resonance with the life of Laurence Olivier. He had been theatrical royalty for half a century when this film was made, initially (with John Gielgud and Ralph Richardson) one of the princes, and eventually king of the great Shakespearean roles. Now in the video he is seventy-six, frail, in poor health. He lived six years longer, increasingly feeble, but this was his last great role, his farewell to the world of Shakespeare. And he is still every inch a king.

*Unforgiven*, “Deserve’s got nothin’ to do with it”). Gloucester’s callousness and credulity motivate and enable Edmund’s villainy; Kent’s outspokenness and impetuousness lead to his banishment and imprisonment in the stocks; Cordelia’s devotion to verbal integrity rivals Isabella’s fierce defense of her chastity in *Measure for*

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*Fingerprints (continued from page 25)*

and the rest, without examining the many reasons why traditional scholarship regards them as being quite distinct from "Shakespeare," will surely cause many otherwise sympathetic readers to question whether the book contains anything of merit. And that is unfortunate, most of all for such readers. There is much which makes this book worthy of careful reading, study, debate and—one hopes—refinement of some of the methodologies employed in it.

*Shakespeare's Fingerprints* has much to teach anyone. The elegant construction of the arguments for Oxford's authorship of "Shakespeare" alone, not to mention the sophisticated discussion of various topics such as the "fair youth" problem, make it an exceedingly worthwhile book. For serious Shakespeareans or students of Renaissance poetry it is an invaluable book. No reader will finish it without feeling that he or she has a much enhanced knowledge of the technical beauties and philosophical idioms of Elizabethan poetry, a subject on which these two writers are apparently prepared to guide our understanding for many decades to come.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> *The Poems of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford*: With Biographical Notice, Introduction to the Poems, and Notes by Thomas Looney (2<sup>nd</sup> edition published by the Kennikat Press Port Washington, New York/London, 1975). This edition edited by Ruth Loyd Miller.

<sup>2</sup> 549.

*Every word (Continued from page 7)*

phrase spoken by Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*. The circumstances are quite different and Autolycus is no Hamlet, but it turns out that the phrase as used in that play—spoken, incidentally, to a character who is a clone of the Stratford man—is as much a textual signature and merits a study in itself.

Clearly what we do know is that, unlike Shaksper of Stratford, whose understanding of tragedy was most likely limited to losing various lawsuits, we have an author in Shakespeare who appreciates and understands tragic circumstance because, as he seems to be telling us here, he himself was living the elements of tragedy. De Vere's life follows the tragic path: starting at the top as a leading member of England's most noble family next to the Tudors, following all the way through his lifelong reversal of fortune, his fall ultimately due to the very thing that gave his life its meaning, writing poetry and plays, to the decline of his estate and position, and finally to his death and utmost indignity, the disappearance of his name. Nevertheless, out of tragedy arises de Vere's ultimate victory as author of a literature which is among the greatest the world has ever known and, as we will witness, his final vindication.

I can think of no writer more aware of or concerned with the issue of identity than Shakespeare. It is his subject, and it is his tool, the center of his poems and plays: who people are and how true (*ver*) they are to themselves and to others. At the same time, I can think of no writer more know-

ing of the language and how it works, how it is structured, and what it can achieve or better equipped to use that language to regain the object of his lifelong quest: his name.

#### References:

1. Roger Stritmatter equates the poet's "keep[ing his] invention in a noted weed" to "cloak[ing] in an ambiguous literary narrative." See Stritmatter in page 2 of his review of Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England*, 1992 at [www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/Pattersonrev.html](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/Pattersonrev.html) as reprinted from the Spring/Summer 1995 issue of *The Elizabethan Review*.
2. Stritmatter, p 5.

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## Shakespeare Matters

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