



# The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter



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“Shakespeare led a life of allegory: his works are the comments on it.” – John Keats

May 2010

## Shakespeare and “The King of Hungary’s ‘Peace’”

*An Earlier Source for an Allusion in  
Measure for Measure*

By **Connie Beane**

LUCIO

If the *Duke*, with the other Dukes, come not to composition with the King of *Hungary*, why then all the dukes fall upon the King.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary’s.

– *Measure for Measure* (1.2.1-5)

This minor bit of dialogue early in the first act of *Measure for Measure* has puzzled commentators for years. Scholars such as J.W. Lever gloss it as a topical reference: “the King of Hungary’s peace’ quibbles on ‘hungry peace’, a topical pun when English volunteers in Hungary were serving against the Turks. Down-at-heels ex-soldiers were sometimes nicknamed ‘Hungarians’. Cf. *Wiv.*, 1. iii. 21” (Lever 9). Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, in their edition of *Measure*, connected the reference to a post-1604 revision of the play:

There is no mention of this King of Hungary elsewhere in the play, nor is there anything in the plot to throw light on the passage quoted. Only one thing is clear – that the King of Hungary’s “peace” was something highly undesirable ... (Quiller-Couch, Wilson 104)

Quiller-Couch and Wilson then proceed to link the reference to a peace treaty

(cont’d on p. 14)

## Much Ado About Authorship in Media

The Shakespeare Authorship Question has reached a new level of legitimacy upon the fresh release of a book devoted to the topic by English professor James Shapiro, *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* The major media has embraced the book, and the controversy, by featuring interviews with Shapiro and reviews of his book online, and in English and American newspapers. Academics have long ignored, dismissed, and even ridiculed those who doubted the Stratford Man as Shakespeare, but the public’s fascination with the controversy has put them on the defensive. Shapiro, in his recent interview with *The Wall Street Journal* (April 2, 2010), admitted his fears about this surging public attention. He stated that Roland Emmerich’s upcoming film portraying the Earl of Oxford as Shakespeare, “will be a disaster for those of us who teach Shakespeare.” Yet he also stated that Shakespeare was a “court observer” due to his having “performed at court over 100 times probably in the course of his career ...” Although Oxfordians would agree with the former statement, the latter about the Stratford Man is a fantastic piece of guesswork. In his interview, Shapiro also revealed the new defense strategy that academics are being forced to adopt: the sonnets of Shakespeare, written in the first person, are *not* autobiographical, nor are there autobiographical sources or references anywhere in the Shakespeare canon. He stated that “either you believe he’s recycling bits and pieces of his life, or you believe that he imagined them, and I like to think that he had the greatest imagination of any writer in the language. And I don’t want that belittled.”

Oxfordian scholars and enthusiasts, as well as other anti-Stratfordians, were also heartened by a clear-sighted and

incisive review of Shapiro’s book in the April 2010 edition of *The Brooklyn Rail: Critical Perspectives on Arts, Politics and Culture*. The reviewer is William S. Niederkorn, a well-known commentator on the authorship question, and one of the most perceptive observers of its growing importance. Niederkorn’s 5,000-word essay, “Absolute Will,” reveals the inconsistencies, circular reasoning, and ridicule of anti-Stratfordian scholars that permeate Shapiro’s book, which has just been published by Simon & Shuster. Niederkorn describes Alan Nelson’s *Monstrous Adversary* as “one of the most bilious biographies ever written,” “riddled with errors . . . and an embarrassment to scholarship.” In recounting the recent history of the authorship question, Niederkorn also remarks that *The Oxfordian*, “the best American academic journal covering the authorship question, publishes papers by Stratfordians. By contrast, there is no tolerance for anti-Stratfordian scholarship at the conferences and journals Stratfordians control.” Niederkorn’s piece was chosen as the book review of the week by the National Book Critics Circle.

Perhaps the most notorious Shakespeare-related book of the last decade, *Contested Will* has already been reviewed in *Publishers Weekly* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *salon.com*, *The Economist*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The London Review of Books*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* and others. The book was also reviewed on the SOS’s website (SOS Online, Archives, Dec. 2009). Oxfordian scholars Richard Whalen and Tom Hunter provide additional reviews in this issue on pp. 7 and 12. It appears that the Anti-Anti-Stratfordian movement is “at last gasp,” to quote Oxford’s phrase in *Cymbeline* (1.5.53).

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## Peter Moore's Research in New Edition

German publisher Verlag Laugwitz has just issued *The Lame Storyteller, Poor and Despised*, the collected Shakespeare papers of literary historian and Oxfordian Peter Moore (1949-2007). This collection contains nearly thirty articles that appeared in peer-reviewed journals in the U.S., England, Holland and France from 1993 to 2006. The volume was edited by Gary Goldstein and Dr. Uwe Laugwitz. Moore's research covers the following topics:

- The Shakespeare plays were written from 1585 to 1604 and not 1590 to 1613, as commonly supposed
- The Rival Poet of the *Sonnets* was the Earl of Essex and the Fair Youth was the Earl of Southampton
- Shakespeare's share of *Two Noble Kinsmen* was written the last year of Elizabeth's life – and ended with her death
- The dramatist attacked in Ben Jonson's "On Poet Ape" was Thomas Dekker and not Shakespeare
- Shakespeare used the Bible's two-witness rule involving murder in designing Hamlet's inner dynamic
- Shakespeare adapted the Earl of Surrey's Psalm 8 as well as *Piers Plowman* in writing Hamlet's soliloquies
- Shakespeare set Christian and pagan philosophies against each other in *King Lear* and mediated the debate through the concept of nature
- Shakespeare used ancient and modern notions of time and Epicureanism in devising *Macbeth's* structure

"Peter became one of the most brilliant scholars of the Elizabethan period late in life," noted Dr. Laugwitz. "He was not an academic – he did not receive a doctorate, nor did he teach Shakespeare. What is special about his insights into Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Age is that they derive from a most intriguing background – military officer, legislative aide, and education official, with degrees in engineering and economics (Univ. of Maryland). I would compare his contributions in the field of Shakespeare studies to that of Lessing's." Dr. Laugwitz referred to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher, critic and dramatist who championed Shakespeare

to German audiences. "Peter's method is like Lessing's: disassembling the false constructions of established authorities and trying to gain new ideas from his critical work by merging objective historical analysis with a keen literary sensibility," added Dr. Laugwitz.

Editor Gary Goldstein described the new Moore publication. "The first half of the book focuses on the *Sonnets*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*; the second half investigates the chronology of the plays and the controversial authorship issue of the Shakespeare canon, with Moore deconstructing the traditional case of Shakespeare from Stratford, then laying out new evidence that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote the plays." "What makes Peter Moore's work of lasting value to scholars, theater professionals and the general public," said Goldstein, "is his ability to delineate Shakespeare's original intent in his most important works." A lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, Moore became a legislative aide to U.S. Senator John East from North Carolina, an official in the Georgia State Department of Education, and a director at a national non-profit organization dedicated to dealing with troubled youth.

Dr. Uwe Laugwitz publishes books focusing on Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period. Since 1997, Laugwitz has co-published with Robert Detobel the annual, *Neues Shakespeare Journal*, in both German and English. Gary Goldstein was former editor and publisher of *The Elizabethan Review*, a peer-reviewed history journal and currently is the managing editor of *Brief Chronicles: The Inter-Disciplinary Journal of the Shakespeare Fellowship* ([www.briefchronicles.com](http://www.briefchronicles.com)). *The Lame Storyteller* is available throughout North America for \$25 through at [www.elizabethanreview.com](http://www.elizabethanreview.com) or by email: [garygoldstein1@bellsouth.net](mailto:garygoldstein1@bellsouth.net); it is also available from the SOS for \$25 plus \$4.95 shipping (P.O. Box 808, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598, 914-962-1717, or [sosoffice@optonline.net](mailto:sosoffice@optonline.net)). The book is available in Europe for 25 Euros through the publisher at [www.laugwitz.de](http://www.laugwitz.de), or email: [verlag@laugwitz.de](mailto:verlag@laugwitz.de).

## Searching for Shakespeare's Earliest Published Works

By Paul H. Altrocchi, MD

In the very May-morn of his youth,  
Ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises . . .  
*Henry V* (1.2.120)

In recent years, some non-Stratfordian scholars have asserted that Shakespeare began composing poetry and translating classical works at a very early age. There are good reasons for some of these assertions, but not for all of them. Similarly, nearly all orthodox Shakespeare scholars believe that because it has been shown that Arthur Brooke was a real person, and that the name "Ar. Br." appeared on the title page of *Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, then Brooke must have been the author of that work. This is not true at all. In a previous article in *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, I demonstrated that Arthur Brooke's only definite published work was a 1563 translation from the French of *The Agreement of Sondry Places of Scripture* (Altrocchi 2007). The translation style was literal, tedious and boring, without an iota of creative flair that – based upon linguistic analytical guidelines – rules him out as the author of *Tragicall Historie*, published in 1562. *Tragicall Historie* showed evidence of unique talent, imagination, power, rhythm, choice of words, and word-combinations highly suggestive of a young Shakespeare. This explains why an adult Shakespeare was able to use so much material from *Tragicall Historie* in his play, *Romeo and Juliet*, without being labeled a plagiarist (Ogburn 389-390). *Tragicall Historie* represents the earliest known major published work of Shakespeare. Although there is no definite proof, I believe that Edward de Vere was the author of *Tragicall Historie*, written when he was eleven years old and published when he was twelve.

### Who Was the True Translator of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*?

In 2005, I showed by semantic analysis that the uniquely brilliant "Golding translation" of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* could not possibly have been created by

the plodding, pedantic, stupor-inducing Arthur Golding, but only by the poetic genius of Shakespeare (Altrocchi 2005). Everything about this beautiful poetic piece, including its captivating verbal music, cadence and unique use of words is Shakespearean. Other Oxfordians had previously arrived at the same opinion. Hank Whittemore, for example, left little room for doubt in 1996 when he stated that "Arthur Golding could not, would not, and did not translate Ovid's tales," concluding that Golding "was in every way incapable of it" (Whittemore 1).

The "Golding translation" of Ovid, an extremely innovative work modeled after Ovid, was published in two installments: the first four books in 1565 and the entire fifteen books in 1567. The poet not only metamorphosed 12,000 of Ovid's lines into inspired poetry with remarkably novel, fanciful, and racy word craftsmanship, transforming Ovid's Latin into rhyming English, but also added 2,500 new lines and invented dozens of new words. Arthur Golding simply did not have the innate gifts to accomplish this creative work. He wrote only one poem in his life and the quality was inferior.

Golding never would have allowed an author unknown to him to use his name on the translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He would, however, have permitted his favorite nephew, Edward de Vere, to do so. Golding and De Vere were both living at Cecil House during the period 1563 to 1565, the time when the translation work on *Metamorphoses* was beginning (Nelson 43). De Vere was fifteen and seventeen when the two parts of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were published. Based upon my previous semantic analysis, the translator of Ovid was William Shakespeare. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the gifted poet translator of Ovid was Edward de Vere.

We can say with complete confidence, however, that Shaksper of Stratford-on-Avon was not involved in either the original composition of *Tragicall Historie* or the enchantingly creative resculpting of Ovid.

Shaksper was not even born in 1562 when *Romeus and Juliet* was published, and he was only one year old in 1565 and three years old in 1567 when the two parts of *Metamorphoses* were printed. Since both of these works are semantically and stylistically Shakespearean, shouldn't this eliminate once and for all the Stratford businessman from Shakespeare authorship consideration? Stratfordians remain placidly impervious to the endless barrage of Oxfordian near-smoking guns year after year. As Charles Dickens wrote in *Dombey and Son* in 1848: "Habit!" says I, "I was deaf, dumb, blind and paralytic to a million things from habit."

True geniuses tend to display their extraordinary gift early in life, during childhood or adolescence. We don't know what Shaksper of Stratford was doing as a child. If he attended grammar school, there is no record of it because the records for the years in question have disappeared. As an adolescent, he was a butcher's apprentice, and probably illiterate. The purpose of this semantic analysis is not to prove that Edward de Vere is Shakespeare, but to determine if the Shakespeare canon can be broadened to include any other early publications.

### Thomas Phaer's Translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*

Based upon the similarity of the Elizabethan pronunciation of Edward de Vere's last name, "Vair," and Thomas Phaer, who was listed as the translator of the *Aeneid*, professors of Linguistics Michael Brame and Galina Popova have asserted that Edward de Vere's first published work was his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* in 1558. They based their conclusion on a professorial hunch, not on their techniques of semantic fingerprint analysis. They state: "Indeed, by age eight de Vere had translated seven books of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which were published in 1558 under the Phaer pseudonym. He adopted this pseudonym both as a tribute to the real-life Thomas Phaer, who died

in 1560, and as a play on his own family name Vere . . .” (Brame 463-4)

If true, this would be De Vere-Shakespeare’s earliest known work. Let’s look at the evidence for Brame and Popova’s conclusion. Thomas Phaer (1510-1560) graduated from Oxford and studied law at Lincoln’s Inn, subsequently using his legal training as a member of Parliament from Wales and as a justice of the peace, crown searcher, customs officer, and solicitor. He later trained in medicine and practiced as a rural family doctor in Wales for more than 20 years (Bower 1-4). His publications reflect the broad range of his intellectual interests:

1532: *Of the Nature of Writs*, a legal book translated from Latin

1543: *A New Book of Precedents*, a compendium of important legal decisions

1544: a volume containing four medical works: A translation from the French of Jehan Goerot’s medical text, *The Regiment of Life*; an original medical essay entitled *A Declaration of the Veins*; an article on the plague, *A Goodly Brief Treatise of the Pestilence*, written in English for common citizens; and *The Book of Children*, a book on medical problems in infants and children. *The Book of Children* was so popular that Phaer has been called “The Father of English Pediatrics” (Ruhrah 147). Phaer specifically wrote the book for laymen, not in Latin, but in simple English for families with children, demystifying and summarizing the best known treatments for common childhood afflictions such as respiratory infections, skin disease, epilepsy, nightmares and “pyssing in the bed.”

1544: A rhymed poetic preface to Peter Betham’s translation of Jacopo de Porcia’s *The Precepts of War*.

1558: A translation in rhyming English of the first seven books of the *Aeneid*, in non-rhyming Latin.

1559: A 34-verse poem entitled “How Owen Glendour seduced by false prophesies took upon him to be Prince of Wales,” a contribution to the first English edition of *The Mirror for Magistrates* – a compendium of stories about the tragic result of greed and lack of wisdom in public figures.

Below is an example of Phaer’s translation of Virgil’s Latin (Book 1, lines 18-22):

Virgil:  
Urbs antiqua fuit, Tyrii tenuere coloni,  
Karthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque  
longe  
ostia, dives opum studiisque asperrima  
belli;  
quam Iuno fertur terris magis omnibus  
unam  
posthabita coluisse Samo. . .

Phaer’s translation:

There was a town of ancient time  
Carthage of old it hight  
Against Italia and Tyber’s mouth late  
loose at seas aright.  
Both rich in wealth and sharp in war, the  
people it held of Tyre  
This town above all towns to raise was  
Juno’s most desire,  
Forsook her seat at Samos isle and here  
her arms she set  
Her chair, and here the minds to make (if  
all gods do not let).

Here is an example from Book 3, lines 19-24, just giving Phaer’s translation:

There lieth a land far aloof at sea, where  
Mars is lord, and where  
The largy fields and fertile soil men  
Thracis called, do care.  
Sometime Lycurgus fierce therein did  
reign and empire hold.  
An ancient stay to Troy, and like in faith  
and friendship old  
While fortune was. To that they went,  
and on the crooked shore  
Foundations first of walls they laid with  
designs luck full fore.

To his credit, Phaer translated the *Aeneid* loosely, using rhyming poetry to capture the spirit of Virgil’s creativity. This is exactly what a young Shakespeare did in his marvelously original translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. What is the quality of Phaer’s translation? Mediocre at best, with the wording and rhythm of many lines sacrificed to a compelling need to rhyme. Phaer’s contemporaries, however, thought otherwise, e.g. George Puttenham in his *The Arte of English Poetry* (1589): “In Queen Mary’s time flourished above any other, Doctor Phaer, one that was well learned and (who) excellently well translated into English

verse heroical certain books of Virgil’s *Aeneidos*” (Bower 6). Does Phaer’s verse sound at all like William Shakespeare, as exemplified either in *Tragicall Historye* or in the translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*? Not in the least. Phaer exhibits meager verbal fluency, little inventive imagination, awkward rhythm and rhyme, and not a trace of Shakespeare’s sparkling creativity, even in his childhood work, *Tragicall Historye*.

### Who Translated the *Aeneid*?

Because the pronunciation of Phaer is “Phair,” and that of Vere is “Vair,” does not mean that Thomas Phaer is a pen name of Edward de Vere. There is no stylistic evidence that such is the case. In fact, the evidence in favor of Thomas Phaer himself translating Virgil’s *Aeneid* is substantial:

- Phaer kept meticulous records of the dates and duration of his *Aeneid* translating. For instance, he began the translation on May 9, 1555, each book taking an average of 20 days to translate (Bower 5).
- He described the translation as “my pastime in all my vacations” (Bower 5).
- Phaer published the first seven books in 1558. His literary executor, William Wightman, published Phaer’s translation of the first nine books after Phaer’s death in 1560, with this introduction: “The Nine First Books of the Eneidos of Virgil converted into English verse by Thomas Phaer, Doctor of Phisike, with so much of the tenth Book as since his death could be found in unperfect papers at his house in Kilgarran forest in Penbrokshire.” (Bower 8)
- According to a recent biographer, “Phaer requested that the second edition of his *Eneidos* be dedicated to the rising Protestant politician Sir Nicholas Bacon, Elizabeth’s Lord Keeper of the Great Seal.” Wightman followed his wishes, explaining Phaer’s personal request: “Declaring moreover unto me that his very mind and purpose was not only to print the former part (of the translation) again for reformation of some faults overslipped upon the first impression, but also having finished the same, to dedicate the whole work unto your Lordship, whom he took for a special Patron and friendly favorer both of him and his doings.” (Bower 9)
- Phaer seriously injured his right hand, probably in a fall from a horse, on April

3, 1560 after completing the translation of books eight and nine. He died from complications of the fall in August 1560. According to Wightman, Phaer continued to translate the tenth book up until the day before he died, writing the final translated lines with his left hand, subsequently included in Thomas Twyne's 1583 completion of Phaer's work on the *Aeneid* (Bower 9).

Surely these documented personal connections to the work confirm Thomas Phaer as translator of the *Aeneid*, with no valid evidence historically or linguistically that either a young Shakespeare or Edward de Vere was the translator.

### Was Shakespeare Responsible for other Translations Attributed to Golding?

We took Ovid's *Metamorphoses* away from Arthur Golding on stylistic grounds alone, despite his name on the title page. De Vere was already fluent in Latin when he came to Cecil House and there is no evidence that Arthur Golding was ever De Vere's tutor in Latin or that they ever collaborated on a Latin translation project. Let's examine, however, three other translations, supposedly by Arthur Golding, to see if they might be the work of an adolescent Shakespeare: Leonard Aretine's *History of Rome vs. the Goths* (1563); Justin's abridgment of Trogus Pompeius' *History of Greece* (1564); Julius Caesar's *The Gallic War* (1565).

### Leonard Aretine's *History of Rome Against the Goths*

The title page of this 1563 translation reads:

The history of Leonard Aretine, concerning the wars between the Imperials & the Goths for the possession of Italy: a work very pleasant & profitable. Translated out of Latin into English by Arthur Golding. Dedicated to Sir William Sicill, Knight, Principal Secretary to the Queen's Majesty, and Master of her highness' Court of Wards & Liveries. Finished at your house in the Strand, the second of April, 1563. Arthur Golding. Rowland Hall, printer.

The authorial name, "Leonard Aretine," refers to Leonard the Aretine, whose real name was Leonardo Bruni (1369-1444). Bruni played a prominent role in

Florentine politics but achieved his fame through writing. His early works included translations from Greek into elegant Latin of books by Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, and Demosthenes. Bruni did not translate literally, but used his own creativity to transmit the flavor and meaning of the work, a stylistic method never attempted by Arthur Golding. In his dedication to William Cecil, Golding displays his typical long-sentenced, grammatically awkward verbosity:

And therefore although the want of fine penning and eloquent inditing of the history in our language, enforce me to confess it unworthy to trouble your honor being otherwise busied in most weighty affairs of the Realm: yet notwithstanding partly in consultation of my duty, but more upon confidence of your clemency, I have taken boldness to dedicate the same unto you: so much the rather, inasmuch as the work entreateth of serious and weighty matters.

This typical Golding wordiness shows not a hint of Shakespeare's elegant, fluid and precise style. Golding reveals his ponderous style in the long opening sentence of his sixteen-page "Epistle to the Reader":

Forasmuch as this work of Leonard Aretine entreateth of the repulsing of the Goths out of Italy by the Captains of the Emperor of Constantinople, touching lightly by the way the cause of their arrival in the same country, it seemeth expedient to make further rehearsal of the cause of their first entrance within the bounds of the Roman Empire, and of their success in the same through which which they grew so strong in process of time . . . [the same sentence continues for seventeen more lines]

The translation of Bruni's text is dryly verbatim without any creativity of style. By contrast, at this very time, we believe a young Shakespeare was working on his immensely original, imaginative transmutation of the first four books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. While immersing himself full-time in the creative genius of Ovid, he would not have taken on the simultaneous task of translating a mundane work like that of Leonard Aretine. Semantically, the translation of *De Bello Italico Adversus Gothos* is vintage Arthur Golding, showing not a smidgen of Shakespearean panache.

### *Trogus Pompeius*

In 1564 Arthur Golding published, for the first time in English:

The abridgment of the *History of Trogius Pompeius*, gathered & written in the Latin tongue by the famous historiographer Justine, and translated into English by Arthur Golding: a work containing briefly great plenty of most delectable histories and notable examples, worthy not only to be read, but also to be embraced & followed by all men. Dedicated to the right Honorable Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxinforde, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, Viscount Bulbeck, etc. London, 1564, Thomas Marsh, printer.

Trogus Pompeius was a Roman historian who lived in the era of Emperor Caesar Augustus (63 BCE-14 CE), as did the writers Virgil, Horace and Ovid. Pompeius' work was a 44-book history of Greece from early Athens and its interaction with the Persian Empire to its conquest by Rome. None of the original books survives, but the work lived on in the form of Justin's famous *Abridgment of Trogius Pompeius*, which epitomized the 44 books. We know almost nothing about Marcus Juntianus Justinus, but his Latin style suggests that he lived a considerable time after the Augustan age. His abridgment is first mentioned in the early 400s, so he is thought to have lived in the third or fourth century CE.

The very fact that Golding dedicates the work to Edward de Vere in highly commendatory terms suggests the validity of Golding's authorship. Presumably De Vere would not dedicate his own work to himself, especially with such complimentary wording. Even more important, the long, complicated sentences and pedestrian tone confirm Golding as the translator – because these stylistic hallmarks follow Golding throughout his career as a translator. Golding's work is sterile and wearisome without any Shakespearean literary features. Semantic analysis emphatically rules out Shakespeare as the translator of *Justin's Abridgment of Trogius Pompeius*.

Golding's translations were motivated at times by an almost fanatic Puritan religiosity, including a million and a half

words on Deuteronomy and the incredibly long-winded sermons of John Calvin. Golding's dedicatory epistles are entirely rewritten in the later editions of *Trogus Pompeius* in 1570 and 1578 and are mainly religious diatribes that once again suggest Golding as the author. For instance, in 1570 his Dedication stated:

First and foremost the obstinate and stubborn-hearted Papists, the sworn enemies of God, the pestilent poison of mankind, and the very wellsprings of all error, hypocrisy, and ungraciousness, (who, while they bear sway be more cruel than bears, wolves, and tigers. . . and at all times more mischievous than the Devil himself) . . . etc.

William Shakespeare was clearly familiar with Justin's *Abridgement* in Latin or the translation by Arthur Golding. As Charles Wisner Barrell pointed out in 1940, there are at least ten citations in Shakespeare's plays derived from Justin (20). For instance, in *Henry VI-Part 1* (2.3.3) Shakespeare uses Pompeius' reference to Tomyris as Queen of the Scythians, whereas all Greek historians referred to Tomyris as Queen of the Massagetae:

COUNTESS OF AUVERGE

The plot is laid; if all things fall out right,  
I shall be as famous by this exploit  
As Scythian Tomyris by Cyrus' death.

### Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* – *The Gallic War*

In 1565 a translation of *The Gallic War* by Julius Caesar, a superb general and succinct writer, was published with the title page reading:

The eight books of Caius Julius Caesar containing his martial exploits in the Realm of Gallia and the countries bordering upon the same, translated out of Latin into English by Arthur Golding, Gent. Dedicated to the right honorable Sir William Cecill knight. . . At Powles Belchamp the 12th of October, Anno, 1565, London. William Seres, printer.

The first seven books were brilliantly written by Caesar, the eighth by Aulus Hirtius, Caesar's long-time aide. Caesar recounts not only his remarkable military achievements in adding a huge territory to the Roman Empire, but also describes

the Celtic and Germanic peoples and their cultures. Once again, Arthur Golding is identified by his tediously windy dedication to William Cecil which contrasts strikingly with Caesar's crisp and concise writing style. Here is the first sentence of Golding's dedication:

Albeit (Right Honorable) that the difficulties of this present work, considering my own want of experience not only in matters of war, but also in diverse other things whereof this history entreateth, did dissuade and in manner discourage me from enterprising the translation thereof yet notwithstanding forasmuch as I perceived it to be a work, for the pleasure and profitableness thereof much desired of many, and that such of my simple travails, as I have heretofore bestowed in like matters, have been well accepted at your hand, as well boldened by your favorable encouragement, as also remembering that earnest endeavor overcometh all things: I went in hand therewith.

Golding's verbosity similarly tries his readers' patience in his Preface. Even Golding, however, could not spoil Caesar's lean, clear writing style, as in the beginning of Book 1, so familiar to students of Latin, beginning with *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres*:

All Gaul is divided into three parts, of the which one is inhabited by the Belgies, another by the Aquitanes, and the third by them who in their tongue are called Celts, and in ours Gauls.

There is nothing Shakespearean about the Dedicatory Epistle, the Preface to the Reader, or the translation of *De Bello Gallico*. The translator also tells us that he, Golding, was writing from Powles Belchamp, which was his primary residence in Essex.

### Conclusions

In a work of translation, the epistle of dedication and preface to the Reader – both representing original writing by the translator – yield solid linguistic evidence of his identity. Semantic experts all agree that writing style characterizes a given author. The brilliant, albeit immature, Shakespearean creativity displayed in the original poetry of *Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* and in the poetic

re-creation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* establish with a high degree of certainty that Shakespeare was the author of these long narrative poems rather than Arthur Brooke and Arthur Golding.

When one is translating prose, as in the works of Leonard Aretine, Trogus Pompeius, and Julius Caesar, it is more difficult to stamp one's individuality on the work than if one is translating poetry. Yet the translator of prose immediately makes the key choice of whether to transpose the work word-for-word, or to rise above the literal meaning and portray the intent and charm of the original author's words. Literal translators like Golding, although performing a useful service by making ancient works available in modern tongues, too often betray the original author's uniqueness, thus fulfilling the Italian caveat: "Traduttore, traditore" – the translator is a traitor.

Arthur Golding and Shakespeare were at opposite ends of the translating and literary spectrum, Golding the prototype literal translator and Shakespeare the marvelously imaginative, flavor-catching portrayer of the original author's creativity, beautifully exemplified in his lyric transformation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which that has stood the test of four centuries as the finest translation of Ovid ever done. Because of their mundane, colorless, dreary translational styles, I say with confidence that the three works published under Arthur Golding's name and analyzed here were, in truth, works of Golding and not Shakespeare. Just as Lloyd Bentsen told Dan Quayle, "You're no Jack Kennedy," so I say to Thomas Phaer, "You're no Shakespeare." To Phaer's credit, however, his broad range of intellectual interests made significant contributions to the fields of law and medicine and, in his poetic translation of the *Aeneid*, he deserves credit for trying hard to catch the original tang of Virgil's Latin verses. Phaer's own limited poetic abilities, unfortunately, were not up to the task, as he himself admitted.

By careful analysis of ample evidence from Phaer himself and from his contemporaries, one can confidently conclude that Thomas Phaer was the 1558 translator of the *Aeneid*. No evidence suggests that

(cont'd on p. 15)

## Book Review

## Stratfordian Professor Takes Authorship Question Seriously

By Richard F. Whalen

*Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?*  
by James Shapiro  
Simon and Schuster, 2010

For the first time, a leading Shakespeare establishment professor, James Shapiro of Columbia University, has given serious consideration to the controversy over Shakespeare's identity in a book-length analysis – a precedent that may help make the authorship issue a legitimate subject for more research and discussion in academia, even though Shapiro remains a Stratfordian.

Shapiro's *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* is a history of the authorship controversy, from Delia Bacon in the 1850s to DoubtAboutWill.org in 2007. He recognizes that the seventeenth Earl of Oxford is by far the most impressive challenger and that his backers have achieved considerable success in recent decades. His final word is that a choice must be made, a stark and consequential choice.

The book's cover will dismay committed Stratfordians. It shows the Stratford monument depicting a writer with pen, paper and a pillow; but his head is cut off by the author's name and the book's title, including the subtitle, *Who Wrote Shakespeare?* Indeed, that is the question. Shapiro, however, states at the outset that he aims to answer a different question: Why have so many eminent people doubted that Will Shakspeare of Stratford was the author and why have they argued for someone else, such as Oxford? In so doing, Shapiro declines to enter the debate over the evidence for Shakspeare or for Oxford in any depth of detail. As a result, the general reader is left with the impression that the question of Shakespeare's identity may well be legitimate, despite efforts by many Stratfordians to dismiss it. That a scholar of Shapiro's standing in the Shakespeare establishment should take this approach bodes well for Oxfordians.

Die-hard Stratfordians, of course, will

be able to tease out what they need to defend Will Shakspeare and shoot down Oxford. Shapiro cleverly provides ammunition here and there for pot shots, although nothing like an artillery barrage. The discerning general reader, for whom this book is intended, should be able to see through this tactic. To answer his question – why so many eminent doubters? – Shapiro argues that from the beginning the skeptics about Shakspeare as Shakespeare were influenced by their predispositions – that is, their unspoken, underlying assumptions and their worldviews. Most of his book describes the skeptics' predispositions – and those of Oxfordians – based to a great extent on new primary-source research. Another major argument of his book is that Elizabethan and Jacobean writers, including Shakespeare, relied entirely on their imagination and were not autobiographical. This is a difficult assertion to support given the lack of biographical information about nearly all the writers of the period, and it's probably not true, as even some Stratfordian scholars have found. Oddly, Shapiro undercuts his own argument against autobiography in Shakespeare by saying that Will Shakspeare probably did draw on his life experience but that not enough is known about it to identify how and where. Oxfordians can point to the extensive, documented record of Oxford's life, which Shapiro mostly ignores. He mentions just a few correspondences between Oxford's life and Shakespeare's works and then dismisses them as unconvincing. He tries to ignore the core debate about who wrote Shakespeare, but in the end he can't escape it.

Shapiro's prologue opens dramatically with what he suggests is an elaborate anti-Stratfordian forgery – the story of James Wilmot of Warwickshire. Wilmot reportedly searched circa 1785 in and around Stratford for documents about Shakspeare as the poet-dramatist, found none, and decided that Shakespeare was Sir Francis Bacon. Wilmot told a friend, but swore him to secrecy. The friend

finally disclosed Wilmot's story with two lectures dated 1805. When Shapiro examined the manuscript lectures, he found anachronisms, leading him to suggest that they were a mid-twentieth century forgery by a Baconian, probably attempting to counter the claims for Oxford. What Shapiro does not say in his text is that Daniel Wright of Concordia University came to this conclusion seven years ago after John Rollett of the De Vere Society told him about his own suspicions. Professor Wright reported on his investigations at a conference at Concordia, and a news article on his talk was published in the Summer 2003 issue of *Shakespeare Matters*. Shapiro mentions the article in his bibliographic essay. Also left unsaid by Shapiro, but subtly implied, is that although Stratfordians would commit many frauds and forgeries, the first forgery was anti-Stratfordian; and that he, Shapiro, has brought it to the attention of the general public. Then follow the book's four chapters, entitled simply "Shakespeare," "Bacon," "Oxford," and "Shakespeare" *redux*, plus an epilogue and a lengthy bibliographic essay.

True to Shapiro's intention, the first "Shakespeare" chapter is not about evidence for Shakspeare as the dramatist. It is largely about the deification of Shakespeare, the drive to find out more about Shakspeare and the forgeries of William Henry Ireland and John Payne Collier, who concocted new "evidence" for Shakspeare as the poet-dramatist. Ireland's forgeries were exposed by Edmond Malone, the leading Shakespeare scholar of the eighteenth century. But Malone comes under fire for trying to find Shakspeare's autobiography in the plays, thus opening the door, says Shapiro, for anyone to use an author's fiction as a source for biography and to indulge in excessive speculations about Shakspeare's biography. Shapiro is hard on Malone, a revered Shakespeare scholar. Shapiro then suggests that a convergence of trends in scholarship accelerated skepticism about Shakspeare as

Shakespeare. This convergence included Malone's autobiographical speculations, research into Shakspeare's life that was yielding only business records, and growing doubts about his role in writing all of the plays in the canon, combined with the emergence of doubts about Homer as a person and about the Bible as a reliable source for the life of Jesus. Shapiro's thesis is an impressive merging and melding of multiple literary-cultural trends.

The "Bacon" chapter has much more information on Delia Bacon, an American, than on Sir Francis Bacon, the authorship candidate. Shapiro describes at length and with new, primary-source information describing how Delia Bacon's background and romantic difficulties influenced her conviction that Shakespeare could not have been written by the Stratford man. She was a brilliant, eloquent lecturer on Shakespeare's works. Her book on the works published in 1857 was the first to contend that the plays must have been written by aristocrats, a shockingly revolutionary idea at a time of intense Bardolatry. Bacon was uncompromising, and to her contemporaries she appeared to be obsessed. She spent the last years of her life in a mental institution. Most Stratfordians ridicule Delia Bacon, but Shapiro is quite sympathetic, depicting her as an articulate, outspoken woman – an eccentric in a man's world of literature studies and public lecturing who argued radical ideas about Shakespeare. It's possible that she was unfairly stigmatized by the nineteenth century, catch-all label of female hysteria.

The "Bacon" chapter continues with Mark Twain, who persuaded himself that all fiction, especially his own, is autobiographical (Shapiro disagrees) and got drawn into the arcane world of ciphery (which Shapiro debunks). Henry James's ambiguous pondering on the authorship issue was as much about his own genius and legacy as about Shakespeare's and is, thus, unreliable, according to Shapiro. Sir Francis Bacon, the most popular candidate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is dismissed in a few paragraphs about the failure of Ignatius Donnelly's ciphers to gain followers, and the disparity of writing styles between

Bacon the essayist and Shakespeare the poet-dramatist.

Although Shapiro uses the predispositions of the early skeptics to disparage their heretical skepticism, he is hardly in a position to do so. As a career Stratfordian, he is naturally predisposed to believe in Shakspeare of Stratford as the poet-dramatist. He has a doctorate in Shakespeare studies from the University of Chicago. He has taught Shakespeare for twenty-five years at Columbia, and he has published two earlier books about Shakespeare. One manifestation of his Stratfordian predisposition is that while researching and writing his book, he declined to consult or communicate with Oxfordians.

The "Oxford" chapter covers eighty-seven years of the Oxfordian movement

*"To counter the Anti-Stratfordian point that no one noticed when Shakspeare, supposedly the famous poet-dramatist, died in 1616 ... [Shapiro] cites the publication in 1619 of the Pavier Quartos ..."*

from J. Thomas Looney's book in 1920 identifying Oxford as Shakespeare to the DoubtAboutWill.org web site launched in 2007. Shapiro tries to score against Oxford, but an historical narrative is not conducive to arguing points of evidence. In any case, in this chapter Shapiro is not as harsh and dismissive as his more strident colleagues, and he describes the success of the Oxfordian movement with a fair amount of admiration.

The chapter opens with Sigmund Freud's idea that *Hamlet* must reflect aspects of the dramatist's life. Shapiro explores Looney's influence on Freud, concluding that Freud, unconventional in his views and a strong supporter of Oxford as the poet-dramatist, deceived himself and revealed more about his concern to find confirmation of his Oedipal theory of the

unconscious than about whether Oxford wrote *Hamlet*. His analysis of Freud is fascinating, but his conclusion about what he describes as Freud's conflicted obsession about Oxford as Shakespeare seems facile. Shapiro admires Looney's book, *"Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, and did a great deal of research on his background. He says Looney was heavily influenced by his unusual worldview. Looney was a follower of Auguste Comte's Positivist philosophy. In England this philosophy became a religion that venerated Shakespeare. Shapiro tells at some length how Looney aspired to become a Positivist Priest of Humanity. The new information that Shapiro found supported his view that Looney was feudalistic, reactionary, anti-democratic and authoritarian. Shapiro damns Looney with faint praise by noting that Looney was not a Nazi-sympathizer despite some of his letters.

In effect, Shapiro's critique of the early skeptics, Baconians, and Oxfordians with Looney, in particular, for their worldviews and predispositions amounts to an *ad hominem* argument, the argument of last resort: *i.e.*, if you don't like the message, attack the messenger. Shapiro's specific criticisms of Looney are that he assumed that the Shakespeare plays were not written for money and were autobiographical. At the same time, he criticizes his fellow Stratfordians for making fun of Looney's name and dismissing Looney's *"Shakespeare" Identified* that Shapiro praises as a formidable book and a compelling *tour de force*.

Shapiro concludes that Oxford quickly took over from Bacon and other contenders as the leading candidate for a number of reasons. The autobiographical correspondences in the plays were more persuasive. Contemporaries praised Oxford, an aristocrat, for his poetry and his plays; and his early writings could be compared to Shakespeare's. Looney's book was heartfelt and convincing, and his followers were committed. Today's Oxfordians could certainly agree with that assessment.

After a quick survey of many Oxfordian supporters and scholars well known to Oxfordians, Shapiro examines their

predispositions and then their efforts to find new ways to support Oxford. Like the Baconians, he says, Oxfordians began to find reasons to ascribe the writings of many Elizabethans to Oxford, among them Marlowe, Spenser, Gascoigne, Montaigne, Thomas Nash, Anthony Munday, John Lyly, Robert Greene and Arthur Brooke. Shapiro calls this effort reckless. Leading Oxfordian scholars of course are generally cautious, finding so far evidence possibly involving Brooke, Greene, Nash and perhaps Lyly than for the other more famous writers. In any case it has little to do with the basic evidence for Oxford as Shakespeare.

Shapiro then uses the so-called Lord Admiral and Prince Tudor hypotheses to discredit the case for Oxford. He notes that Looney and Freud hated the Prince Tudor theory, which suggested the third Earl of Southampton was the son of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth. He adds that the Lord Admiral hypothesis that Oxford was the son of a teenage Elizabeth and Thomas Seymour, the Lord Admiral, piles incest upon incest. In his prologue, Shapiro had told how a nine-year-old asked him a classroom whether Shakespeare or someone else wrote *Romeo and Juliet* and how relieved he was not to have been asked about the Virgin Queen's incestuous love life. Shapiro's technique is the gentle jab rather than the harsh put-down. The two hypotheses, Shapiro says, reveal the burning desire by Oxfordians to find a story about Oxford's traumatic life in the Shakespeare plays. Conjectured conspiracies and cover-ups are inevitable, he notes, although adding that Oxfordians are divided on this issue.

Shapiro is very selective in his choice of early Oxfordian researchers and writers for consideration. He says little or nothing about the exhaustively researched books and articles of Eva Turner Clark, Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn and Ruth Loyd Miller, major works that find Oxford's biography in Shakespeare. But he devotes three pages to Percy Allen who used a medium to get in touch with Shakspeare, Bacon and Oxford to confirm that Oxford was Shakespeare and to suggest the location of manuscripts. Shapiro observes, however, that the Stratfordian mocking of Allen is

perhaps not fair since dead writers speak to the living in their writings, and professors like himself make a living interpreting their writings from beyond the grave. He might have added that spiritualism was a very popular movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that attracted prominent men and women and was at its peak in the 1920s.

Shapiro cleverly describes the impressive success of the Oxfordian movement. Oxfordians in the early 1980s, he says, would never have believed the success they would enjoy in 2010. He demonstrates this with an imaginary article in *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* in 2010 that would have been beyond belief for Oxfordians in the 1980s. Filling a full page in his book, the imaginary article describes the Oxfordian successes:

- Universities offering advanced degrees in authorship studies
- supporters like Derek Jacobi, Mark Rylance and others from the theater world
- books by independent scholars and books for young adults from mainstream publishers
- high school students competing to write the best Oxfordian essay
- major articles in the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, and *The New York Times* and programs on National Public Radio
- moot court debates before justices from the highest courts in America and England
- peer-reviewed Oxfordian journals
- international conferences
- Oxfordian editions of the plays for teachers of Shakespeare;
- impressive Wikipedia entries and Internet web sites that are more professional and impressive than Stratfordian sites
- and multiple discussion groups on the Internet.

All this, says Shapiro, without any new documentary evidence.

He ends the "Oxfordian" chapter with an admiring description of John Shahan's DoubtAboutWill.org web site that is deliberately anti-Stratfordian, not Oxfordian. Shapiro's "Oxford" chapter concludes with additional recognition of landmarks in his history of the Oxfordian societies and the success of the Oxfordian movement since the 1980s. He cites the moot court before three justices of the

U.S. Supreme Court as most important in making the authorship issue legitimate. He mentions the PBS-TV Frontline programs, Charles Beauclerk's lectures and TV appearances, Roger Stritmatter's PhD dissertation on the markings in Oxford's Bible, and William Niederkorn's major articles in *The New York Times*. Shapiro says that much in Niederkorn's articles promoted the Oxfordian proposition, but the quotes he uses from *Times* articles are factual and objective. His quarrel with Niederkorn's articles is that they gave the authorship controversy more prominence – but so will Shapiro's own book. After this generous report on the success of the Oxfordian movement, the general reader may well conclude that there must be something to the case for Oxford as Shakespeare

The last chapter, "Shakespeare," (and the Epilogue) retell familiar arguments for Shakspeare but in a curiously haphazard way, and significantly, they amount to Shapiro's own imaginary biography of Shakspeare as the poet-dramatist. He says that book buyers, printers and playgoers in London would have known if Shakspeare was not Shakespeare and would have left word about it. There is no agreement, he says, among Oxfordians about how such a far-fetched conspiracy to hide Oxford's authorship, if there was one, would have worked. If Oxford wanted to hide his authorship he should have left the plays anonymous. The hyphen in "Shake-speare" is no evidence for it being a pen name; it was a quirk of typesetting.

Shapiro doesn't make many errors, but one involves the spelling of the dramatist's name. He gives "Shakspeare" as one of the spellings on early editions the plays to try to show no difference from the various spellings of Shakspeare of Stratford. He's referring to *Love's Labor's Lost*, but on that quarto it's spelled "Shakespeare," the spelling on all the plays and poems, except for the second "a" in this single instance. Shapiro erroneously makes it appear that "Shakspeare" or a Stratford variant was the byline not only on this play but also on other plays, which is not true. He also cites the "Shaxberd" spelling for the playwright Shakespeare in the Revels Account for 1604, but that was declared

a forgery by all the leading Shakespeare scholars when the notorious forger John Payne Collier published its “discovery.” It is almost certainly a forgery, although the Shakespeare establishment decided later to accept it, probably because “Shaxberd” is a variant of the Stratford spelling, thus tying the Shakespeare plays listed in the 1604 Revels Account to Shakspeare of Stratford.

Whoever wrote the plays, Shapiro continues, had to know the performers in the acting companies so he could write parts to their capabilities, and Shakspeare was an actor. Most persuasive for Shapiro are the two different epilogues written for *Part Two of Henry IV*, supposedly one for the public theater and the other for a court performance. It’s not conceivable for Shapiro that Oxford, or anyone but the commoner-actor Shakspeare, could have spoken the epilogue claiming authorship of the play before an audience at court. Oxfordians would argue the reverse. Shapiro continues with more bits of evidence: the Stratfordian interpretation of *Groatsworth of Wit*, the praise for Shakespeare (Shapiro’s Stratford man) by many contemporaries, Francis Meres’ mention of both Oxford and Shakespeare as poets (powerful evidence for Shapiro), the Parnassus plays, and Ben Jonson’s mixed praise for Shakespeare in *Timber*. The evidence in the First Folio, always cited by Stratfordians, gets just a few descriptive paragraphs, without supporting argument or mention of the obvious ambiguities therein that Oxfordians note. He briefly misreads Diana Price’s argument that Shakspeare left no paper trail, but devotes ten pages to the Blackfriars theater, a long passage having little to do with the authorship debate.

To counter the anti-Stratfordian point that no one noticed when Shakspeare, supposedly the famous poet-dramatist, died in 1616, Shapiro offers an argument that most readers should recognize as quite flimsy. He cites the publication in 1619 of the Pavier quartos of several Shakespeare plays. But that’s three years later and the quartos did not eulogize the dramatist or even note that he had died. He concludes this chapter with five pages on recent Stratfordian scholarship suggesting that

five late plays show stylometric signs that Shakspeare collaborated on them with other playwrights. Shapiro does not believe that Oxford would have collaborated with anyone. That’s probably true, but he offers only a grudging, half-hearted dismissal of the Oxfordian response that nothing in the allegedly post-1604 plays proves they were written after Oxford’s death in 1604 and that other dramatists may have revised some plays after Oxford died. In the end, Shapiro indulges in a gentle jibe about would-be collaborators squabbling over five of Oxford’s late Shakespeare plays at a garage sale after Oxford’s death.

In the “Epilogue,” Shapiro returns to the argument that while fiction in recent centuries has often been autobiographical, that was not the case for Elizabethan-Jacobean writers. As it happens, however, Stratfordian scholars have argued that

*“Shapiro asserts...  
[Shakespeare’s]  
vocabulary was no  
greater than that of  
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and women.”*

those writers did indeed draw on their life experience, their times, and their reading. Professor David Riggs, the biographer of Ben Jonson, says that Jonson created his works out of his life and that *Volpone* in particular is a self-portrait. Shakespeare editor Harry Levin of Harvard says Jonson lampooned contemporaries and what he wrote drew on his observations of life in London. In her biography of Jonson, Marchette Chute says that many touches in Jonson’s plays are based on literal fact. The Shakespeare scholar Edward Berry says that an autobiographical impulse characterizes many writers of the Tudor period, and, for example, Philip Sidney identified himself and Penelope Rich in *Astrophil and Stella*. Not enough is known about many Shakespeare contemporaries, but various commentators on Spenser and Marlowe also contend that their lives are, or must be, reflected in their writings. As Professor Berry concludes

in his book on Sidney, autobiographical touches in fiction were an integral part of Elizabethan culture.

Shapiro’s position on autobiography is also tellingly ambiguous. He rejects autobiography in Elizabethan-Jacobean fiction, including Shakespeare, but says he has no doubt that Shakspeare drew on his personal experiences. But because almost nothing is known about Elizabethan writers, anything that might have been evidence for Shakspeare as Shakespeare is missing. The second argument negates the first. Or the first makes the second irrelevant. Shapiro leaves unsaid that a great deal is known about the documented life of Oxford, so that his biography can be compared to passages in the plays to see if there are correspondences that add up to evidence for his authorship. Oxfordian literature, of course, is replete with such correspondences. Recent examples include Mark Anderson’s *Shakespeare by Another Name* and the Oxfordian editions of *Macbeth* and *Othello*. Shapiro argues that Stratfordian autobiographical readings of Shakespeare are speculative exercises that only encourage Oxfordians to do even more speculation. As an example of the latter, he uses Hank Whittemore’s one-man performance at the Globe based on Whittemore’s book, *The Monument*. Shapiro praises it as a spellbinding performance, enthusiastically received by the audience. He adds, however, that he left the theater disheartened by what he construed as a merging of the Prince Tudor conspiracy theory, spurious history, and fiction as autobiography.

Shapiro generally does not distinguish clearly between two different ways of researching and writing biography. The first method, which is fundamental to biographies of writers, is to take the documented facts of a writer’s biography and then determine how a writer, such as Shakespeare, drew on his documented life experience and his times to write his plays. This might be called reading forwards from the writer’s known biography to the imaginative works. The second, more dubious method is to *discover* in writer’s works supposed biographical details about his life and emotions that are not supported by his

documented biography. This method has been called reading backwards from the works to write biography. Fiction becomes a source for biography but a conjectural and unreliable source.

One of Shapiro's main arguments against Oxfordians is that they look in the works, such as the Sonnets, to find Oxford's biography, but that's not true. Like all reputable biographers, Oxfordians take Oxford's documented biography and then go to the Shakespeare plays and poems to determine whether and how Oxford's life experience and concerns are reflected in them, evidence tending to confirm his authorship of them. Shapiro fails to distinguish this method of biography from the method of reading backwards from the works, that is, using fiction as a source for biography.

After ranging through a hundred and fifty years of the authorship controversy, Shapiro makes a rush for the finish line in the final seven pages with more unsupported, Stratfordian assertions. They add to his own imaginary biography of Shakspeare as Shakespeare. Authors, he says, can write fiction about things they have not experienced; the Shakespeare plays did not require visits to Venice or Verona. How did he do it? We don't know. He may have owned or borrowed books. He may have gleaned what he needed by browsing in the bookstalls. The theaters may have kept cheap copies of the classics for an actor-playwright to ransack when he was not rehearsing or acting. (Will the general reader believe all this conjectural biography?)

It is nonsense, Shapiro asserts, that only aristocrats had access to all those books that were sources for the plays. Shakspeare's knowledge of the world, including everything about Italy, could have come from conversations with all sorts of travelers. His knowledge of hawking, hunting and other aristocratic pursuits and the ways of monarchs and courtiers could have come from his visits to royal palaces with the acting companies. His education in the Stratford grammar school was about equal to that of a university today and better in the classics than that of a typical classics major. His vocabulary was no greater than that of other educated

men and women. Playgoers in the Globe and other public theaters would have no trouble understanding the Shakespeare plays. Shakspeare could imagine all the roles in the plays; he didn't need any life experience. Creating literature is mystery. Great writers have powerful imaginations. Rapid fire and cursory, Shapiro's summary of the case for Shakspeare comes across as superficial and half-hearted. Even the general reader may have a hard time swallowing his encapsulated conjectures and his fervid emphasis on the all-encompassing power of a writer's imagination. They may wonder, too, at Shapiro's objection to the frankly imaginary biographies of Shakspeare as Shakespeare by Stephen Greenblatt of Harvard and Rene Weis of University College London. He could have included Jonathan Bate of Warwick University.

Does it make any difference who wrote the great plays and poems? To his credit, Shapiro's final words in his book are that it matters a lot, and that there is a choice to be made. It matters how we imagine the Elizabethan-Jacobean times and how they were different from our own. Most important, it matters how we are predisposed to read the plays – as by a dramatist who needed no life experience to write the works of Shakespeare but could imagine it all, or as by a dramatist whose life experience inspired, influenced and enriched the works of his imagination as he created great literature out of life. Shapiro calls it a stark and consequential choice, in contrast to most Stratfordian scholars, who don't want there to be a choice at all.

Granted, there is much for Oxfordians to critique and rebut, including material omissions, unbalanced emphases, unsupported opinions, faulty judgments, the usual straw-man arguments, contradictory stances and some other clever rhetorical tactics. At times, his handling of evidence is so devious as to deftly conceal his errors of interpretation. Oxfordians would have preferred a book by a Shakespeare establishment professor that would open the door even wider to scholarly discussion of the evidence for Oxford as Shakespeare, but Shapiro's is a big step in that direction.

On balance, Shapiro's book might be considered good news for Oxfordians, who could have expected much harsher treatment by a scholar in the Shakespeare establishment. Shapiro shows a fair measure of appreciation for the Oxfordian proposition, and he freely acknowledges Oxfordian successes. That alone is reason enough to welcome his book. In addition, the book's title and cover deliver a strong message of legitimacy for the authorship question.

Shapiro acknowledges that little is known about Shakspeare as Shakespeare. He takes very seriously the notable people who became skeptical of Shakspeare and supported Oxford. He acknowledges that the correspondences between Oxford's life and Shakespeare's works were found persuasive. He does not resort to sarcasm, as have S. Schoenbaum and other hard-line Stratfordians, and he deplores the imaginary biographies of Shakspeare by Greenblatt and Weis. Shapiro observes that the long-standing taboo against authorship studies in most of academia has not made the question go away, and acknowledges that the case for Oxford has achieved some legitimacy in academia. Oxford is the most successful candidate, and the issue is attracting more people than ever before. The Internet has created a level playing field for Oxford.

In sum, the very fact that that a tenured professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University, a leading Shakespeare scholar, and the author of two other books on Shakespeare, would devote three or four years to researching and writing a book on the authorship controversy will give greater prominence to the Shakespeare authorship issue. Shapiro's book may persuade general readers who love Shakespeare to look into the authorship controversy and the case for Oxford. It may inspire more professors of English literature and Renaissance history to consider the authorship a legitimate subject for research and study, and more books like Shapiro's *Contested Will*.

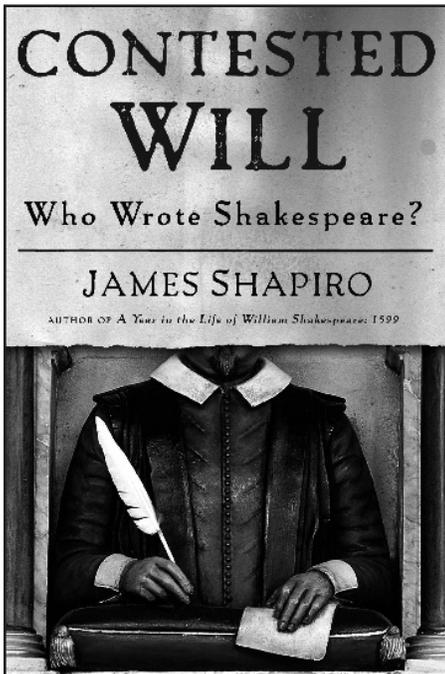
*Richard F. Whalen is the author of Shakespeare: Who Was He? The Oxford Challenge to the Bard of Avon, and editor of The Oxfordian Shakespeare Series.* □

## Book Review

## Shapiro and Why Authorship Doubters Don't Believe

By Thomas Hunter, Ph.D.

*Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?*  
by James Shapiro  
Simon and Schuster, 2010



Let's start with the good news about James Shapiro's *Contested Will*. The good news is that for the first time a Stratfordian has become familiar in some detail with Oxfordians and Oxfordian history. The bad news is the distortion, twisting, and misrepresentation Shapiro feels obliged to employ in telling the Oxfordian story. Shapiro goes out of his way to protest the history of shabby, if not hostile, treatment of authorship proponents by the scholarly community. As his narrative plays out, however, it becomes clear that Shapiro's attitude toward authorship is as shabby and hostile as that of any of the traditional scholars he criticizes. It doesn't take long for the book's surprisingly collegial initial façade to deteriorate into the more familiar hard face of Stratfordian bias and intolerance.

From concept to conclusion, *Contested Will* is another perversion of scholarship to make a point. We have seen this before

in Alan Nelson's monstrous biography of Oxford. Shapiro conducts no substantive analysis of authorship issues. He provides no discussion of the merits. His approach is to talk about the personalities of authorship. His modus is to explain away authorship by explaining away its proponents through the years. His book is one prolonged, detailed *ad hominem* attack – pure and simple. Substantive arguments concerning the true author of Shakespeare's works do not count in Shapiro's world, since the mere fact of questioning authorship is by definition deviant behavior. Shapiro's quest thus becomes the search for the motives that drive such errant behavior.

The central question for Shapiro is: Why after two centuries, did so many people start questioning whether Shakespeare wrote the plays? A similar question on another issue might be: Why after so many centuries did so many people start questioning whether the sun revolved around the earth? The answer to both questions is: Because that is where the evidence led. But like the Catholic Church and the Inquisition, Shapiro prefers to persecute the doubters rather than face the mounting evidence against his understanding of the universe. Shapiro's approach raises a serious question about Shapiro's book and about Shapiro himself: What motivation drives Shapiro to find the reasons for questioning Shakespeare's authorship in those questioning authorship, and not in the evidence against the Stratfordian view?

We will return to this question after we see how Shapiro attacks authorship proponents. Notably, Shapiro focuses on Sigmund Freud, who famously held for Oxford but whom Oxfordians have never thought to be an example of one who has done primary research and analysis on the authorship issue. Shapiro spends parts of two chapters, 18 pages in all, on Freud and has a field day exposing supposed obsessions and fetishes that

dismiss Freud as just another Oxfordian lunatic.

For Shapiro, Delia Bacon was the first of the deviants, craved fame, and was mad. Mark Twain was consumed by self-promotion; obsessed with his legacy; pre-occupied with twins, imposters, and pen names; stole from Sir George Greenwood; and believed in ciphers. Shapiro is gentler with Helen Keller but also tars her with the cipher brush. Henry James was only interested in creating powerful fiction and obsessed with his own genius and legacy.

Shapiro dismisses J. Thomas Looney as being motivated by religious zealotry. Other motivations found by Shapiro among notable authorship supporters include overbearing egotism, profit motive, and lunacy. He never finds simple interest in the truth as the motivation of any authorship proponent. Shapiro's message is: With motivations like these, how can authorship be taken seriously? As a result, the book never presents or deals with the long history of serious Oxfordian scholarship, such as Dr. Earl Showerman's work on Shakespeare's use of classic Greek sources, or Robert Detobel's demonstrations of the role of nobility in the creation of the plays, or Dr. Noemi Magri's brilliant work on Shakespeare's knowledge of Venice and Italy, or Nina Green's, Barbara Flues' and Robert Brazil's work with original texts and documentary sources and Green's and Brazil's criticism of the shoddy work of Alan Nelson and others presenting alleged scholarship on Oxford.

Shapiro dismisses Roger Stritmatter's pioneering dissertation by stating that his graduate committee was woefully misinformed. He does not deal with the research by Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky that demonstrates the problem with the traditional dating of *The Tempest* – dating that has been used to support the weary, inaccurate argument that Oxford had died before several of the plays

were written – an argument that Shapiro uses freely. Shapiro's short history of Blackfriars Theater omits Oxford's early involvement there in developing the boys' troupe as detailed by the work of Katherine Eggar.

To appear in Shapiro's chapter about Oxfordians is to subject one's self and one's work to innuendo, misrepresentation and pejorative comment. Charles Wisner Barrell's work on the Ashbourne portrait recounted in his landmark January 1940 *Scientific American* article is characterized by Shapiro as "claims" later "exposed as an embarrassing case of wishful thinking." Shapiro accepts as fact the Folger's lame attempts to answer Barrell that have been refuted by Barbara Burris and reported in the *New York Times*.

The blithe representation of opinion as fact occurs hundreds of times in this book. One wonders, for one small but key example, what documentation Shapiro has to support his statement that the Stratford man was familiar with courtly ways because he had "visited royal palaces scores of times."

The offenses to logic and scholarship go on and on in this book to the extent that perhaps they are – in a perverted way – a compliment to what laborers in the authorship vineyard have accomplished. For, if their work has received such attention from one of the establishment's anointed, perhaps it is a measure of how the establishment might be running scared after all. For example, Shapiro's argument for the Stratford man provides one of the grandest examples of circular reasoning in all of scholarship. His argument proves to be little more than this: Shaksper (my spelling) wrote the works because his name appears on them.

If your assumption that Shaksper is Shakespeare provides incontestable proof to you that he is the playwright, then all of your statements relying on that assumption will be unassailable, won't they? The minute you allow the possibility that Shakespeare is a pen name, this indisputable position crumbles to dust. It is possible, for example, to go page by page, paragraph by paragraph, document by document through S. Schoenbaum's documentary life of Shakespeare and find

not one example that demonstrates that Shaksper was the literary Shakespeare. Finally, one of Shapiro's odd predispositions, appearing especially in his discussion of authorship proponents, is his concept of scholarship as competition, and not as a search for truth. This equates to the Stratfordian predisposition to think that Elizabethan playwrights – including Shakespeare – were motivated not by the creation of art but by competition, by greed, and by putting butts in the seats. Shapiro's concept of scholarship tells us more about himself than about his understanding of Shakespeare, both the man and the work.

After a couple hundred pages, however, Shapiro's method begins to catch on, and we begin to suspect that Shapiro is really writing about Shapiro. We certainly would not want to adopt Shapiro's methods,

*“His book is one  
prolonged, detailed ad  
hominem attack – pure  
and simple.”*

but if we did, we realize that his motive behind this book becomes clearer with every insinuation and attack: He wishes to replace the legendary Edmond Malone as the bearer of Shakespearean truth! For it was Malone, Shapiro argues, who introduced the cult of personality – the idea that the plays and poems could reflect autobiographical information – into Shakespeare criticism. Malone committed the original sin of Shakespearean criticism that opened the floodgates of the unfortunate and misguided questioning of the very identity of the man who wrote under the name Shakespeare. It was Malone who spawned the Irelands, Garricks, Freuds and Looneys of the world.

Shapiro seeks to correct Malone's error: to assure us that writers of the time simply did not admit personal elements into their work, and that Shakespeare's magnificent literature is explained by genius and imagination. Is this all a manic exercise by Shapiro to seize the crown of Shakespearean authority from the vaunted brow of the sainted Malone?

Enough of turning Shapiro's method

on himself. What is disturbing is that Shapiro turns his focus on Malone into accusing Eva Turner Clark of seeking to be the Edmond Malone of Oxfordians. Shapiro presents no documentation of this objective for Clark. You can see where this leads. Shapiro is so busy knocking Malone off his pedestal that he applies to Clark another example of the kind of baseless innuendo that populates his book. Shapiro gives no substantive discussion of Clark's research into dating the plays or of her groundbreaking work on hidden allusions within the plays. He just dismisses her as wanting to be the Oxfordian Malone.

The problem with Shapiro's obsession with Malone and with autobiography as the basis of authorship inquiry is that his notion springs from a superficial version of literature's creative process that misrepresents the role played by the author's experiences. It is a concept that suggests Shakespeare could have visited castles or picked up a book to learn about the aristocracy or rubbed elbows at the Mermaid with fellow actors who played before royalty and used that alleged knowledge to recreate the lives of the nobility. Shapiro's concept stops at what an author writes about, not what he creates. Ricky Gervais was asked why he didn't write the television show, *The Office*, until he was forty years old. While Gervais pondered, an associate said, "Because you would have failed at it." And Gervais agreed. He would have failed because it took him that long to live through working at offices of various types until they became part of his experience that he could then recreate for his show. He could have visited offices, he could have talked with office workers, he could have looked up *office* in Wikipedia. But it is an entirely different thing to have lived through it, to have experienced the kinds of things that happen in offices and the kinds of people who work there. Ricky Gervais is no Shakespeare. The experience he depicts is not nearly as intense and meaningful, but the principal is the same.

It is precisely Shakespeare's profound depiction of human experience that makes

*(cont'd on p. 23)*

(cont'd from p. 1)

signed on November 11, 1606, between the King of Hungary and the Turks:

... it was a disgraceful peace, by which 700 villages were said to have passed under Turkish dominion ... the words, at once so pointed and so irrelevant, must be a topical allusion; and there can be little hesitation in attaching them to the peace signed at Zsitva-Torok ... (Quiller-Couch, Wilson 104-105)

Although this allusion fits the Stratfordian paradigm, it was not the only noteworthy peace treaty signed by a King of Hungary. There was a much earlier one – one so well known that Christopher Marlowe made use of it in his *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 2*. This earlier episode involved the Treaty of Edirne and the Peace of Szeged, negotiated and signed by Sultan Murad II of the Ottoman Empire and King Vladislaus III of Hungary in 1444.

### Historical Background

The politics of the countries of Eastern Europe have always been complex and difficult to fathom. The following statement of events is greatly condensed and simplified: On January 1, 1443, with the encouragement of Pope Eugene IV, the Hungarians embarked on a crusade against the Ottoman Empire. Initially, the Hungarians were successful in battle, but just before Christmas of that year a series of skirmishes occurred that left both sides severely battered. When Murad II subsequently approached the Christians with an offer of peace, Vladislaus was receptive, and negotiations began. Despite the fact that Vladislaus wanted and needed the truce with Murad, there were elements within his government and among his allies who pushed strongly for renewed aggression against the Ottomans. Chief among them was the papal emissary, Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, who persuaded Vladislaus to swear an oath – prior to signing the peace treaty with Murad – in which he vowed to abjure any treaties, present or future, which he had made or was to make with the Sultan. The peace treaty with Murad was signed on August 15, 1444, but on September 20, 1444 Vladislaus broke the treaty by sending his army against

the Ottomans. (One might consider that justice was served when, in the climactic battle of Varna on November 10, 1444, both Ladislaus and Cardinal Cesarini were killed.)

### Varna: the Aftermath

Kenneth M. Setton, in *Papacy and the Levant: 1204-1571*, says that over the centuries there has been debate over various issues, such as whether or not Vladislaus signed the peace treaty before he launched his attack, whether an oath given to a non-Christian was binding, and whether either party ever intended to keep the peace. In any case, Setton points out that, as early as 1445, contemporary writers such as Aeneas Sylvius and Filippo Buonaccorsi were accusing Vladislaus of having broken his oath, and Cardinal Cesarini of playing a key role in that act (Setton 78-80). Although few Englishmen in the late sixteenth century would have had access to the works of Sylvius and Buonaccorsi, the story of Vladislaus III and his broken oath would nevertheless have been widely known to Shakespeare and his contemporaries. According to William Zunder, “Within protestant mythology the battle [of Varna] was an archetypal instance of catholic duplicity ...” (Zunder 96, note 12). Martin Luther, in his 1520 thesis, “An Open Letter to the Christian nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate,” made reference to the episode:

... a hundred years ago, that fine king of Hungary and Poland, Wladislav, was slain by the Turk ... because he allowed himself to be deceived by the papal legate and cardinal, and broke the good and advantageous treaty which he had sworn with the Turk ... How could I tell all the troubles which the popes have stirred up by the devilish presumption with which they annul oaths and vows which have been made between great princes. (Luther 86).

By the time of Elizabeth I, Luther’s writings were available in English translation, but there was an even more accessible version of the story in John Foxe’s *Actes And Monuments* (1563). He treated the incident at some length:

These victories of Huniades struck no little

terror to Amurath...and [he] was glad to make truce with Ladislaus and Huniades upon such conditions as they listed to make ... Upon these conditions the Turks being agreed, so was a truce concluded on both parts for ten years, and with solemn oath between them confirmed.

... at which time pope Eugene, so soon as he heard the Turk had returned into Asia, sendeth Julianus Caesarianus, his cardinal ... unto Ladislaus the aforesaid king, with full dispensation and absolution to break his oath and league with the Turk ...

... But the pope belike thought, that as he might lawfully break promise with John Huss, and with other Christians, so also he needed not to observe any league or true taken with the Turk ... [Ladislaus] set out with his army ... and ... came to Varna, a town of Bulgaria...

... The fight continued three days and three nights together ... but the priests and prelates who were in the field ... seeing the Turks begin to fly, unskillfully left their army to pursue the enemy, so that they ... gave great advantage to the Turks ... in which field, Ladislaus, the young king of Poland, having his horse first killed under him, was stricken down and slain. The pope’s bishops, flying to save themselves, fell into the marshes, and there were destroyed, sustaining a dirty death, condign to their filthy falsehood and untruth. Julian the cardinal, who with the pope was the chief doer in breaking the league, in the way was found dead, being full of wounds, and spoiled to his naked skin ... (Foxe, IV 33-34).

### Vladislaus in *Measure for Measure*

If the First Gentleman’s prayer for “peace, but not the King of Hungary’s,” is a reference to Vladislaus III and his abrogation of the 1444 Peace of Szeged, then it resonates with a deeper meaning than the tepid Stratfordian gloss. Such a peace would, indeed, be “highly undesirable.” Although there is no reason why this reference could not have been employed by the Stratford man in a play written in 1606, this new interpretation is of particular interest to Oxfordians. First, it backdates the source of the reference to a period within the lifetime of Edward de Vere. Second, the anti-Catholic tone of the remark lends greater credence to the proposition that *Measure*

## First Oxfordian Edition of Othello

Editors Ren Draya, professor of British and American literature at Blackburn College, and Richard F. Whalen, co-general editor of the Oxfordian Shakespeare Series, have completed the first Oxfordian edition of *Othello*. Informed by the view that the 17th Earl of Oxford wrote the Shakespeare plays, this edition of *Othello* has drawn on the extensive research and writings of Oxfordians and Stratfordians to describe the many correspondences between the play and Oxford's life.

In the introduction to the play, and in the generous line notes, the editors examine how the play reflects the dramatist's knowledge of the aristocracy, court life, the

military, music, the Italian language, and the government and topography of Venice and Cyprus. A major influence on the play was *commedia dell'arte*, at its height in Venice when Oxford was there but unknown in England. Another strong influence was Oxford's concern for his reputation and abhorrence of the specter of cuckoldry. Among the articles in the appendix is the significance of music in *Othello*, and the dramatist's unusual knowledge of the port of Famagusta on Cyprus.

The Oxfordian Shakespeare Series debuted with *Macbeth*, edited by Whalen and published by Horatio Editions-Llumina Press. Forthcoming in the series, and their

editors, are *Antony and Cleopatra* (Michael Delahoyde, Washington State University); *Hamlet* (Prof. Jack Shuttleworth, U.S. Air Force Academy, retired); *The Tempest* (Roger Stritmatter, Coppin State University, and Lynne Kositsky); *Henry the Fifth*, (Kathy R. Binns-Dray, Lee University); *King John* (Daniel L. Wright, Concordia University, Portland, OR); *Love's Labour's Lost* (Felicia Londre, University of Missouri-Kansas City); and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Anne Pluto, Leslie University). The Oxfordian *Othello* (\$16.95 + shipping) is available direct from Llumina Press at 866-229-9244 (toll free) or at [www.llumina.com](http://www.llumina.com) (Literature and Fiction).

(Beane, cont'd from p. 14)

for *Measure* must have been written before the accession of James, whose political agenda was pro-Catholic.

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(Altrocchi, cont'd from p. 6)

eight-year-old Edward de Vere, whom I believe to be Shakespeare, was the translator of Virgil or that Thomas Phaer was his pseudonym, rebutting the conclusion of Professors Brame and Popova that was not backed up by their usual linguistic analytical techniques.

This analysis of one translation of Thomas Phaer and three of Arthur Golding, confirms them as the true translators of the works studied and does not expand the known canon of William Shakespeare either into early childhood or more broadly into adolescence. The 1562 long narrative poem *Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* remains the first known major published work of Shakespeare, and the brilliantly innovative re-creation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, published in 1565 and 1567, is a hallmark of Shakespeare's adolescence.

Paul Altrocchi, MD, graduated from Harvard University, Harvard Medical School and the New York Neurological Institute. A former professor of neurology at Stanford, Altrocchi completed his career as a neurologist in Palo Alto and in Oregon. Since retirement he has published seven books and two dozen papers on the authorship question, and edited, with Hank Whittemore, the first five volumes of a new Oxfordian anthology series, Building the Case for Edward de Vere As Shakespeare. □

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## An Interview with Stephanie Hughes, Former Editor of *The Oxfordian*

By Linda Theil

Stephanie Hopkins Hughes has been involved with the Shakespeare Authorship Question, in research and publication, for many years. She was recently honored with the 2010 Scholarship Award at Concordia University's Conference in Shakespeare Authorship Studies. Hughes completed her B.A. at Concordia in 2000. In her senior year, she wrote "Shakespeare's Tutors: The Education of Edward de Vere," a 235-page study principally focusing on Oxford's early education, and his relationships with such notable men as Sir Thomas Smith and Laurence Nowell. In addition to her decade-long tenure as editor of the Shakespeare Oxford Society's journal, *The Oxfordian* (1997-2007), Hughes edited the 2008 anthology celebrating the SOS's first 50 years, and has written several authorship booklets, including "Oxford and Byron," "The Relevance of Robert Greene to the Oxfordian Thesis," and "The Great Reckoning: Who Killed Marlowe and Why?" In 2006, Hughes co-wrote a narration based on Oxford's letters for a CD read by Sir Derek Jacobi. In early 2009, she launched a blog on the authorship question, [politicworm.com/](http://politicworm.com/). Hughes entertains controversial views: that Oxford wrote Greene's works, and that Emilia Bassano was the Dark Lady, and that Marlowe was not a spy for Walsingham. A summary of these topics appear after the following interview, and can be viewed in more detail on her blog, and on the SOS website.

**SOS: How long have you been interested in the Shakespeare authorship question?**

**Hughes:** In 1986, I was standing in the library in Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard when a friend handed me something off the new arrivals table, Ogburn's *The Mysterious William [Shakespeare]*. I've been reading artists' biographies all my life, so when I read bios of Shakespeare, I always got the feeling that I just hadn't found the right book yet. When I saw Ogburn's book, how big it was, how

thin were the pages, how small the type, I got the message: "Wow! There's a big story here!" I sped through the first half, all devoted to Ogburn's arguments with Stratfordians, thinking all the time: "Who was it? Who was it?" In 1987, I moved to Boston where I got involved with the Boston Shakespeare Oxford Society where I got to know Charles and Bill Boyle, Betty Sears, Charles Beauclerk, Hank Whittemore, and other Oxfordians. Studies began in earnest when I got a job at Boston University, digging into the works of the University Wits and other writers of the period. I gave my first lecture at the Boston SOS conference in 1994, on similarities in the biographies of Oxford and Lord Byron, another aristocratic romantic writer, and prepared one on Robert Greene for the 1995 conference in Greensboro, N.C.

When Charles Beauclerk became president of the SOS in 1995, he appointed me editor of a new annual journal, to be named *The Oxfordian*, naming Bill Boyle as editor and designer of a revamped newsletter. It was thought that having such a platform, one that adhered to accepted scholarly protocols, might encourage Oxfordian scholars in efforts to do the kind of detailed and accurate research that was so difficult to get published in mainstream journals and books. This projection proved accurate, for during my ten years as editor a number of important authorship scholars made their debuts. [*The Oxfordian* debuted in 1997.] Most of the ground-breaking articles published during those years are available for download from the SOS website.

In 1996, I moved to Portland, Oregon, to be near one of my daughters and her family. While there I met Prof. Daniel Wright, who persuaded me to return to school at his university, Concordia, where I had three wonderful years studying Greek and Latin and researching Oxford's education. During this period I discovered Sir Thomas Smith, the tutor that gave Oxford the childhood experiences and education that enabled him to become



Shakespeare. Dan made it possible for me to lecture on my discoveries at the conference that he began in 1997, and to travel with him to London in 1999 on a three-month student exchange, where I was able to do research at the British Library. In 1997, I finally got the chance to give my lecture on Robert Greene at the Seattle SOS conference, publishing a pamphlet on the subject that same year.

Concordia gave me the opportunity to put my research on Sir Thomas Smith into a senior thesis, which since then has expanded into a book which I hope to see published someday. Having graduated in 2000, I continued to give lectures at SOS conferences and at Concordia, and to write articles for *The Oxfordian* and various newsletters. In 2004, I was the grateful recipient of funds donated by participants in the Concordia conference to help me continue my research into Oxford's childhood and education in London. With the help of English Oxfordians, I located the site of Ankerwycke, located on the Thames near Windsor, where De Vere spent his first five years with Smith, and Hill Hall in Essex, where he spent the final three before transferring to William Cecil in London. I spent three days at Smith's alma mater in Cambridge, Queens' College, reading his notebooks and doing research in the Cambridge University Library. I was also able to do research at the Essex Record Office and at the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

**SOS: Has your authorship quest evolved over your period of study?**

**Hughes:** Certainly, although I'm still following the trail of the questions I had after reading Ogburn, what kind of a childhood and education [Oxford] had, what he'd written before becoming Shakespeare, and what were his relationships with the other writers and theater people of his time. The first big breakthrough came with realizing that he was the only person who could possibly have written the Robert Greene canon, still a controversial matter. The second was the discovery of the importance of his tutor, Sir Thomas Smith, since Smith's library and life-style matches so perfectly with Shakespeare's sources. This raised the question of how long he'd spent with him. One of the factors that people don't realize until they get into researching this period is how little of importance was saved. We read the same texts over and over because that's all that's left. It was a time of revolution, and people simply didn't commit themselves to paper. Just because there's no record doesn't mean nothing was happening. *Au contraire!* Nor does it mean that we can't figure out what was happening through secondary or even third hand evidence, so long as we have enough of it. We may not have a smoking gun, but we do have an awful lot of spent shells.

I'd say that the most important development for me over the past two or three years is the desire to create a believable Big Picture, to bring everything from that time that relates to the theater and publishing into a single scenario. The only picture we have now, based on what records remain, is of a handful of writers, actors, and patrons who had next to no connection with each other. That simply can't be the case. This was a small community. Everyone knew each other. Of course, to create such a scenario with so little to go on in the way of records, I have to fill in with conjecture, but by adding the texts themselves, and with the known history of the period as a backdrop, a believable picture is becoming more coherent every day. My focus recently has been on creating a scenario for the 1580s, the "darkness before the dawn" of the great era of Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men. This means bringing together the currently disassociated works

and personalities of Oxford, the University Wits, the Sidneys, the Queen's Men, Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, Thomas Watson, Thomas Lodge, John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, the Burbages, Edward Alleyn, Ben Jonson, Francis Bacon, and Sir Francis Walsingham. I intend to show how and why these artists and their patrons were all so closely involved with each other, and why.

**SOS: *Where do you think the authorship is headed?***

**Hughes:** I really have no idea. We could continue at this level for another hundred years or it could reach the tipping point any day. We have moved forward though. There's a general acceptance now, if not of Oxford, then at least of the idea that someone other than William wrote the canon. Most people by now have at least heard of the question, which most had not 20 years ago. Every book that gets published brings more interested readers. And from the outside there's been a definite shift. Where articles on the subject used to frame it as "the Truth" versus "the Lunatics," then "the Experts" versus "some interesting questions," giving equal time to both, now more often than not it's weighted to our side with only a passing head-shake from the Strats. Perhaps younger editors, less invested in what they were told by their English professors, are gradually moving up into positions of authority. We'll see.

The most interesting development in a long time is the published acknowledgment by the respected Shakespearean Brian Vickers that he agrees with Richard Kennedy's online argument that the Stratford monument was originally made for John Shakspeare. This is huge. It also shows what can be done with the Internet. What I would like to see is a few scholars taking on the question who have the time and the money to do the heavy lifting in the archives. It doesn't matter whether independent, or, if academic, from what discipline: English literature, history, anthropology, psychology, undergrad, post doctorate, somebody who lives in London or can get there often, who can go after the documents and actually start to research. What we've managed to do

so far is so small compared to what the orthodox have done for 400 years. Who knows how often they saw something about Oxford and ignored it because he was not what they were looking for.

I'd like to see us focus on getting historians on board. The history of Shakespeare at the universities should tell us that the English Departments will never open the door of their own free will – it took them 200 years to allow his works to be studied or produced. The history departments are a much better bet. All they have to lose is Oxford as Burghley's ungrateful son-in-law, a minor figure certainly. By placing the great Shakespeare at Eliza's Court along with Sidney, Raleigh, and Drake they have so much to gain.

**SOS: *Are you planning to publish a book?***

**Hughes:** Yes. It's taken me a long time, partly because it's hard to stop researching, but chiefly because of the problems getting a mainstream or academic publisher to take a chance on this subject, particularly from the angles I observe it. But the time may finally be ripe. Right now I'm caught between several approaches, more narrowly on Oxford's education, more widely on the entire writing community, or perhaps on the history of the London Stage, now that we can put its central figure where he belongs.

**SOS: *What happens next for you?***

**Hughes:** I'm going to keep on with the blog. For the first time I'm actually communicating with people on a steady basis, not just once or twice a year at a conference to a handful of listeners, who, sorry to say, sometimes take a nap during a lecture that took me months to prepare. With the blog, every day that goes by somebody's reading something about Oxford or the world he lived it that they haven't heard before. I can't tell you how much that means to me.

**Greene's Groatsworth as a joke**

After four years of closely examining Greene and his works, Hughes came to the realization that Greene's *Groats-worth of Wit* was an elaborate joke. She sensed that

there was too much humor surrounding a work that all agreed, both then and later, was written by Greene in his death agonies. Her suspicions were verified when she discovered that the “surfeit of pickle herring” that supposedly caused Greene’s histrionic death was in fact a reference to a popular clown figure of the time named Pickle Herring. She made her theory public in 1996 on an authorship listserv and in 1997 in a lecture at the Seattle SOS conference; she published a pamphlet about it that same year. With Oxford as Greene, in her opinion, a big piece of the Shakespeare puzzle falls into place.

### Mary Sidney as John Webster

Shakespeare’s story begins with plays like *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* in the 1580s (later rewritten as *Henry VI-Part 3*) and extends for 30 years into the second decade of the 17th century. The latter third of this history is coincident with the Jacobean era when Shakespeare’s plays were the source of the great artistic and financial success of the company known by then as the King’s Men. While studying the voices of the other playwrights of the Jacobean period, it struck Hughes that the plots of John Webster’s two masterpieces closely reflected events in the lives of Mary Sidney and her sons, the patrons of the London Stage to whom the First Folio was dedicated. Similarities of Sidney’s known poetry to Webster’s language, the obvious fact that both plays were written from a woman’s point of view, Webster’s lack of a writer’s biography, plus a host of corroborating dates and details, all contributed to Hughes’s conclusion that these plays were written by Sidney, that she was involved in writing plays for Henslowe as early as 1604, and that all the publications credited to Webster were Sidney’s. In Hughes’s opinion, this is important because it would show that Oxford was not the only court writer to use a proxy. In 2003, Hughes spoke on Sidney’s authorship of *The Duchess of Malfi* at the Concordia conference, and of *The White Devil* at the SOS conference in Washington D.C. Her detailed article, “No Spring Till Now,” about Sidney as Webster was published in *The Oxfordian* that same year.

### Emilia Bassano Lanier as the Dark Lady

After Hughes read A.L. Rowse’s book on Emilia Bassano as Shakespeare’s Dark Lady, another major piece of the authorship puzzle for Hughes fell into place. She saw that several of the problems that Rowse struggled to justify had been resolved with Oxford as Shakespeare, such as the imperious tone of some of the sonnets to Southampton (as though one lord were writing to another), their age difference (not nearly enough with William as author), and so forth. Rowse showed that Emilia Bassano Lanier fit Shakespeare’s description of the Dark Lady. Rowse, of course, was not about to connect her to Oxford, but, Hughes saw that Bassano, Lanier and Oxford have a number of connections: “Bassano grew up in Shoreditch not far from Fisher’s Folly. She was brought up and educated by Oxford’s sister-in-law. And, the dates, their ages, plus her potent sex appeal, as revealed by Simon Forman in his diary, plus her connections to Southampton, fit the love triangle described by Shakespeare in Sonnets 40-42 and 133.” Her article on the topic, “New Light on the Dark Lady,” was published in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (Fall, 2000).

### Christopher Marlowe as Martyr, not Spy

Hughes does not accept that Christopher Marlowe was spying for Walsingham. Though delighted with Charles Nicholl’s sleuthing in his book on Marlowe, *The Reckoning*, Hughes found that Nicholl’s idea that poets and spies are birds of a feather seemed more like special pleading than anything supported by history. Hughes’s deep research on Marlowe finds nothing to corroborate Marlowe’s image as a spy; she believes that this idea arose from a misinterpretation by scholars of a letter sent by the Privy Council to Cambridge in 1587 about his right to a degree. She presented her evidence at the Concordia conference in 1997, and then published, *The Great Reckoning: Who Killed Marlowe and Why?* An expanded version is available on her website. “Marlowe’s martyrdom is important,” says Hughes, “not only because it’s the truth, but also because getting him right is crucial to a proper understanding of the great drama that was the English Literary Renaissance.”

### Sir Thomas Smith as the Real “Smoking Gun”

Until Hughes began researching Oxford’s childhood, no one had published more than a passing mention of his tutor, Sir Thomas Smith. Hughes discovered that Smith was a very important figure in his time, both at Cambridge University and later during stints as secretary of state under both Edward VI and Elizabeth I. As mentioned above, Sir Thomas Hughes was the subject of her senior thesis at Concordia University. She published an article in *The Oxfordian* titled “Shakespeare’s Tutor, Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577).” Hughes took two research expeditions to the U.K., and visited the two locations where Oxford lived and studied with Smith, where he absorbed the immense classical learning exhibited later in Shakespeare’s works. Hughes’s research suggests that Smith was closely involved with the creation of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.

### The Birth of the London Stage as the First Step towards a Functional Democracy

Hughes believes that Shakespeare’s importance extends beyond the confines of literature and linguistics. She believes that Oxford helped to foster year-round commercial theaters in London soon after he returned from Italy. It was Oxford, she believes, who created the situation whereby acting companies could make their livings solely from ticket sales to individuals rather than having to rely on wealthy patrons or other authorities who had the power to dictate what they performed.” She adds, “Though creating a democracy was probably not one of Oxford’s goals, by helping to open the Stage to the public as a year-round and almost daily option, he helped provide a situation where a genuine exchange of ideas was possible between playwrights and an audience who may not have been able to read, but who certainly could think. I believe that once this becomes clear to mainstream historians, we will see a revision of their views on how democratic processes took root in English hearts and minds, processes that were then transported to the colonies in America.” She lectured on this topic at the New Globe in 2006, “Hide Fox and All After.” □

## Who's Th'heir?

### *Another Reading of Hamlet's Opening Line*

By Hank Whittemore

In December, 2009, at a local copy center a woman on line glanced at my Shakespeare-related papers and asked if I had known Dr. Mark Taylor, Professor of English at Manhattan College in New York City, who had died in April. "He was a famous Shakespearean scholar," she said, "and he lived here in Nyack." I had no idea that Dr. Taylor had been a neighbor, although I'd read most of his book *Shakespeare's Darker Purpose: A Question of Incest* (1982) and admired his courage in taking on a difficult topic. I mentioned the authorship question and recalled how the professor had scoffed in print at the "silly notion" that "someone else" wrote the Shakespeare works. "I wish I'd been able to discuss it with him," I said. "He was very enthusiastic," the woman said. "My son was in one of his classes and told me one day Dr. Taylor announced excitedly that he'd had a 'eureka' moment about the opening line of *Hamlet*: 'Who's there?' He told the students he had suddenly realized that it meant 'Who's the heir?'"

Could it be that this simple opening question serves to announce the central theme of the play? At first I thought the idea seemed farfetched, except for one thing, the word *the* is often contracted by Shakespeare as in "Who's th'heir." Horatio says in *Hamlet*, "Not from his mouth, had it *th'abilitie*" and in Sonnet 58 the poet writes of "*Th'imprison'd* absence of your libertie," to cite two examples; and more specifically, in Act 1 Scene 2 of *Henry V* as printed in the First Folio of 1623, the Bishop of Canterbury speaks of "th'Heir to th' Lady Lingare"; and in fact the New Folger Library, Riverside, Pelican and other modern editions print

"th'heir" in the same speech of that scene (Folger 23 line 79; Riverside 982 line 74; Pelican 1131 line 74).

"Who's th'heir" also invites further exploration into an obvious but seldom noticed motive for the prince's behavior. Beyond losing a father, Hamlet has lost his

because, in this literary work with the distinct feel of an autobiographical creation, the traditionally perceived author can demonstrate no personal interest in that theme.

Here is the greatest character in all literature.

Here is the Shakespearean character that most resembles Shakespeare, the only one ... whom we can conceive of as the author of Shakespeare's plays. (Goddard 344)



## The Tragedie of H A M L E T *Prince of Denmarke.*

*Enter Barnardo, and Francisco, two Centinels.*

*Barn.* Who's there?  
*Franc.* Nay answer me. Stand and unfold your selfe.  
*Barn.* Long live the King,  
*Franc.* Barnardo,

place in the world. He has lost his identity. By the time the play ends Hamlet has lost his good name as well – not to mention his life. How deeply does he feel being robbed of the throne? How keenly does he feel that he, not Claudius, deserved to wear the crown? To what degree is Hamlet's emotional turmoil and behavior motivated by his personal and political concerns related to succession?

Many critics conclude that "Shakespeare" is speaking through the character of Hamlet, but what on earth can be driving William Shakspeare of Stratford to wrestle with his own psyche through the sufferings of an heir-apparent to the Danish throne? It may be that Stratfordian scholars tend to ignore the succession question precisely

A stunning pronouncement! And who in Elizabethan England might have most resembled the eccentric, misunderstood, suffering figure of the prince who brings a play to court with lines he has written to stir the blood of his monarch? Find such a man and it's a pretty good bet we'll know the dramatist who created him.

Dr. Taylor's insight coincides with my view that *Hamlet*, while packed with many themes, is ultimately a report about the transfer of sovereign rule – not in Denmark but in England. In other words, the play ends up reporting on the succession to the throne when Elizabeth died. I have agreed with Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn that Edward de Vere must have written the first version of the play by 1584, with young Fortinbras of Norway standing for James of Scotland, who was just eighteen (Ogburn 641). If so, Oxford's prediction came true nearly two decades later – in the spring of 1603 – when James became King of England.

Within months of the succession Oxford neared his own death on June 24, 1604 and presumably continued to work on *Hamlet* until the last moment. He would have been speaking for himself and thinking of the loss of his own identity as well

as his place in the world, while writing the prince's dying lament over his "wounded name," followed by his plea to Horatio to "tell my story." The victorious Fortinbras (James) has the final word, declaring that Hamlet "was likely, had he been put on, to have proved most royally." With Mark Taylor's insight, the action of *Hamlet* can be viewed as framed from start to finish by the underlying problem of succession: "Who's th' heir" or who is supposed to wear the crown and, come to think of it, why isn't Hamlet the new king?

The opening line presents the dramatic question that is finally answered at the end, when Hamlet is proclaimed as one who would have made a good monarch. Members of the Jacobean audience may well have viewed Hamlet's "long delay" in acting against Claudius as a mirror reflection of Elizabeth's long and never-ending delay in naming her heir. Because the play's literal setting is Denmark, which had an elective monarchy, no character on stage wonders why Prince Hamlet has failed to succeed his father. It appears that while Hamlet was at school Claudius convened the Danish version of an expanded privy council and convinced its elite members to elect him. In one of his few references to the succession, Hamlet pointedly remarks that his uncle had "popp'd in between th' election and my hopes."

Elsewhere, the eldest male son stood in line to gain the throne. In that light, the rightful claimant to the throne of Denmark had been deprived of the crown. I believe Oxford must have felt the same way when Elizabeth died and James of Scotland made his triumphant journey south from Edinburgh to London. Nonetheless Hamlet gave his blessing to the new ruler: "I do prophesy th' election lights on Fortinbras. He has my dying voice. The rest is silence." Hamlet's acceptance of Fortinbras reflects Oxford's role as one of the "Lords Spirituall and Temperall," members an expanded privy council convened by Secretary Robert Cecil to help bring about a peaceful succession. Oxford voted with the others to proclaim James VI of Scotland as James I of England (Lee 112). He also wrote to Cecil just a day or two before Elizabeth's funeral on April 28, 1603:

There is nothing therefore left to my comfort but the excellent virtues and deep wisdom wherewith God hath endued our new Master and Sovereign Lord, who doth not come amongst us as a stranger but as a natural prince, succeeding by right of blood and inheritance, not as a conqueror, but as the true shepherd of Christ's flock to cherish and comfort them. (Chiljan 78)

It may be that Edward de Vere was trying to assure the secretary of his loyalty while putting his support for James on the record. Regardless of whatever else he felt, and whether or not his own noble heart had cracked, Oxford appears to have put the stability of the state and the avoidance of civil war ahead of any hopes for an English-born king. As the poet of the sonnets declares upon the death of Elizabeth – "the mortal Moon":

Incertainties now crown themselves assured  
/ And peace proclaims Olives of endless  
age. [Sonnet 107]

Professor Michael Delahoyde of Washington State University said on his Oxford-Shakespeare website: "What would happen if someone like Hamlet actually had the chance to be a king? Interesting, no? Look at the jackasses who always are, and dream wistfully." Delahoyde adds a comment from Goddard:

What Hamlet's succession might have meant may be seen by asking: What if, on the death of Elizabeth, not James of Scotland but William of Stratford had inherited the throne! That would have been England falling before William the Conqueror indeed. And it did so fall in the sense that, ever since, Shakespeare has been England's imaginative king, who has taught more men and women to play perhaps than any other man in the history of the world. (Goddard 386)

And he replies: "Replace Stratford Will with the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, and it turns out not to have been such a wistful impossibility!" (Delahoyde *Hamlet* 5). I wonder what Mark Taylor made of his insight and whether it altered his teaching of the play. Whatever the case, I doubt he would have changed his Stratfordian views because of the Oxfordian implications of "Who's th' heir." Apparently the notion is original, however, and who knows if it might gain support in the future? If it does, Dr. Taylor deserves the credit.

*Hank Whittemore of Nyack, New York, is the author of eleven books including The Monument, elucidating the world of Shakespeare's sonnets (www.shakespearesmonument.com). He currently performs a solo show based on the book, entitled Shakespeare's Treason (www.shakespearestreason.com), co-written and directed by Ted Story. Whittemore also has a blog (hankwhittemore.wordpress.com).*

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## SOS-SF Shakespeare Authorship Conference Sept. 16-19, 2010, Ashland, Oregon

Visit the Shakespeare Oxford Society website for  
conference information and registration.

*The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, and Henry IV-Part 1*  
will be playing at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

## John Thomas Looney (1870-1944)

By Professor The Revd. V.A. Demant

John Thomas Looney, who first attributed the authorship of the “Shakespearean” plays and the sonnets to Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, was a master at an elementary school in Low Fell, Gateshead, County Durham. As my father and he were close friends in personal and intellectual interests, our families met in close intimacy for several years. In my student period I came to know Looney as a philosopher and guide. I am therefore able to say something of the man himself and of his search for a solution of the authorship problem.

Looney, who came of Manx origin, was a person of broad philosophical, religious and literary interests. He was deeply impressed by greatness in the past of the European tradition, and he felt it his calling to transmit an appreciation of this greatness to the younger generation. For some years he belonged to a group of English followers of August Comte, the French philosopher and social thinker, who started the original intellectual system known as Positivism. Comte later founded a religious society without theistic beliefs, called the Church of Humanity. He was a progressive intellectually in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but socially a conservative of the counter revolution in France. Looney derived from Comte a strong sense of the continuity of history and of the community bases of individual enterprise. He eventually loosened his connection with the Positivist movement and latterly became drawn again to the Church of England, with considerable respect for Catholicism. His reading included English poets from Chaucer to Wordsworth, Tennyson, Byron and Burns; writers like Carlyle, Emerson, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer; novelists like Walter Scott and Thackeray. He was also at home with Homer, Dante and, of course, Shakespeare. He presented me with a copy of Carlyle’s works with a special injunction to read “Heroes” before I was twenty. Another present of his was George Tyrrell’s *Lex Orandi*.

I would describe Looney as a sage. He was not in the least like many supporters

of minority movements with a cause, going about with a chip on the shoulder and an obsessional neurosis. He was not by temperament an anti-conformist, nor did he preen himself for the role of espousing an unpopular view. The appearance of *Shakespeare Identified* in 1920 surprised his acquaintances. He had dropped hints to me towards the end of the 1914-18 war, that the Stratfordian authorship was impossible to hold, and that he was setting about deliberately to find, if possible, the true author. This was all the result of a conviction borne upon his mind after years of teaching Shakespearean plays to schoolboys, some of them over and over again. He has described this process in the book.

Even after the publication, Looney never brought up the “Shakespeare” question spontaneously in my conversations with him. But when I asked he was ready to answer questions and explain. Two phases of his thinking I remember quite well. There was first the negative conviction that what we know of William Shakespeare is quite incompatible with the man revealed through the plays and sonnets. This was not a matter of social class, or education or even of ideas. It concerned the unconscious attitudes to the world and life. Quite early on Looney had to meet the criticism that his was a “snob” view, holding that a man who had not been to a university and was of bourgeois origin could not be a literary giant. Looney somewhat resented the stupidity of this criticism. Certainly, he maintained, genius arises in any social milieu and is quite independent of formal education (witness Burns). But some background and peculiar personal attitudes indeliberately colour a man’s work, and another man without them cannot produce counterfeits. Then, secondly and positively, Looney looked around the large mass of Elizabethan lyrical poetry to find evidence elsewhere of the mentality and style he had pictured from the sonnets and plays. This put him on the track of Edward de Vere, some of whose poems have survived

under his own name. Further when he was asked how such a deception as to the authorship could be carried through and maintained, he would expound the peculiar literary atmosphere of the Elizabethan age and then enumerate, from cultural and literary history, several examples of what had been successful literary hoaxes for a long time.

Thomas Looney embarked upon this task with a restrained but determined sense of literary responsibility. He was the last man to try to be merely clever. I recall his tall figure, his scholar’s air given by the poise of his shoulders, his gently aquiline nose and his trimmed beard, his benign and dignified bearing, and the frequent sparkle in his eyes. I would say of him: here was a man who commanded confidence in the authorship question because he was not one-eyed about that, but wise in other fields as well.

*Editor’s Note: This piece was originally published in the Shakespearean Authorship Review (No. 8, Autumn, 1962, pp. 8-9). Vigo Auguste Demant (1893-1983) had a long and distinguished theological career; he also authored several books. At the time he wrote this piece, he was Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology; his previous post was Canon and Chancellor of St. Paul’s Cathedral. According to the Dictionary of National Biography, Rev. Demant traveled to the U.S. to lecture on the Earl of Oxford and the Shakespeare authorship.*

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## Two New SOS Board Appointments

Joan Leon, of Berkeley, California, and James Boyd, of Millwood, New York, were appointed as interim trustees on the Shakespeare Oxford Society Board until the next SOS general meeting in September 2010. They fill vacancies by the resignation of husband and wife Toni Downs and Stephen Downs, who are currently writing and producing a Broadway musical.

"I have been a member of SOS since 1994," said Leon, "when I attended the conference in Carmel. I went to that meeting because my husband, Ramon Jiménez, was fascinated with the topic and I wanted to share in it with him. I kept going because I loved the search for answers, enjoyed the people, and

became convinced that Edward de Vere was Shakespeare." Leon, who now serves on the membership and fundraising committees, has been involved in non-profit fundraising and program development during her entire career. Among her longest and most successful projects was raising millions of dollars towards a center for the disabled, located in Berkeley.

Although long familiar with the authorship controversy, Boyd became especially interested after reading an article in *The New York Times* about Roger Stritmatter's thesis on Oxford's Geneva Bible. Boyd, who holds a doctorate in physics, found this tangible evidence very convincing for Oxford's case. "We

physicists *like* data and eagerly follow it wherever it leads," said Boyd.

The Board of Trustees is looking for more candidates to fill other Board vacancies. This year, President John Hamill, Michael Pisapia, Virginia Hyde, and Brian Bechtold, will complete their terms. Hamill has served the maximum of nine years in succession on the Board and will not be eligible for re-election until he has been off the Board at least one year. Board members with terms ending in 2011 include James Sherwood and Susan Grimes Width, and board members with terms ending in 2012 include Matthew Cossolotto, Richard Joyrich, and Richard Smiley.

## Letter from SOS President John Hamill

Greetings Shakespeare Oxford Society members. While we have made some progress, we still have many big challenges ahead. James Shapiro has openly stated in his new book, *Contested Will*, that his objective is to end the Shakespeare authorship controversy. Academia fears that we are out to destroy Shakespeare. The truth is just the opposite: when Oxford is accepted as the true author, Shakespeare's works will gain a new perspective and dimension. We need to promote the media attention to the authorship issue, and to inform the public and academia about what is so obvious to us – the connection between Oxford's life and Shakespeare's works.

I want to thank you for renewing your membership and hope that you will consider making a contribution to the Society. You may be aware that the Society deliberately keeps its dues lower than the amount necessary to cover basic expenses to make it as affordable to as many people as possible. But this means that we must appeal to those who can do a little more to make up the difference. Our goal this year is to raise \$20,000. This amount, when combined with our

dues and other revenues, will insure that we can finance the society's publications, *The Oxfordian* and the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, and other activities, including a new program of grants for researchers to locate, translate, and publish documents related to the Earl of Oxford and his case for the Shakespeare authorship.

We have good news to share about our public education efforts. In November 2009, the BBC interviewed *The Oxfordian* Editor Michael Egan. In March, About.com published a two-part interview with SOS Second Vice-president, Matthew Cossolotto. We are also printing extra copies of Ramon Jiménez's excellent article, "The Case for Oxford Revisited," to distribute as a pamphlet and to feature on our website. Jiménez's piece appears in the latest issue of *The Oxfordian*. We are proud to report that William Niederkorn described *The*

*Oxfordian* as the best American academic journal on the authorship question ([www.brooklynrail.org](http://www.brooklynrail.org)). As part of our outreach program, we are mailing *The Oxfordian* to 400 English professors in academic institutions around the country. This effort has been underwritten by a \$500 gift from one of our members, and donations from the SOS Board of Trustees. An additional contribution from you at this time will help us with all of these activities. I will soon be putting forth specific proposals for fundraising and I hope that our membership will rise to the challenge. Please join me in supporting this effort, and contact me with ideas about how the Society can best direct its energies and resources: 415-596-4149, [hamilx@pacbell.net](mailto:hamilx@pacbell.net). I look forward to hearing from you.

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SOS News Online:

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## Letter to Editor

A last minute error seems to have crept into the copy for my essay, "Ben Jonson & *The Tempest*: "the Copie may be Mistaken for the Principall." The error occurs on page 19, in "Figure 1," which compares characters and their "humours" in Jonson's *Every Man in His Humor* to similar characters and "humours" in *The Tempest*. There is, of course, no character named "Antonio" in *EMIHH*. The final character progression of the list should have read, "Prospero, privileged light wit," in the column for *Every Man in His Humour*, becoming "Antonio, privileged dark wit" in *The Tempest* column. Elsewhere, the list of words that I claim, "appear nowhere else in Shakespeare's canon, but do appear in Jonson's works" mistakenly lists "barley" ("barley-broth" in *Henry V*), "imposter" (spelt uniquely with an "e" in *The Tempest*; "impostor" in *All's Well* and *Pericles*), and "fens." Although *Lear* has "fen-sucked," the mistake was in taking a word from the wrong column in my notes, where "fens" appears among the rare words shared with *Coriolanus*, another likely candidate for Jonson's forging talents. I would also withdraw "totters," an insignificant sole appearance.

While not as rare as "corollary" or "correspondent," Jonson's use of "fens" (in *The Masque of Queens*, 1609) remains of interest, since we find him using or quoting these two rare *Tempest* words in a note to this couplet:

From the lakes and from the fens,\*  
From the rocks and from the dens.  
\*...To which we may add this **corollary** out  
of Agrip. de occult. Philosop. L. 1.c.48.  
Saturno **correspondent** loca quoervis  
foetida, tenebrosa, subterranean, religiosa  
& funesta ...

A translation of this passage from Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa shows Jonson researching Caliban-like territory (*Ben Jonson's Selected Masques*, by Stephen Orgel, p. 350):

To Saturn correspond any places that are fetid, dark, underground, superstitious or dismal, such as cemeteries, tombs, dwellings deserted by men and ruinous with age, dark and horrible places, lonely caves, caverns, wells. Furthermore, fish-ponds, fens, swamps and the like.

Marie Merkel

(cont'd from p. 13)

the playwright Shakespeare. His royal characters emerge as complex, deeply realized human beings because the author has been there and has seen the situations and the conflicts that produce character, irony, action, and consequence. What can be more personal – for example – hence more exquisite, than Sonnet 29, "When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes, /I all alone beweepe my outcast state /And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries /And look upon myself and curse my fate," or the combative Sonnet 121, "No, I am that I am, and they that level /At my abuses reckon up their own"? How does a professor of literature such as Shapiro, supposedly sensitive to the power and nuance of Shakespeare, equate such poetry with that impersonal doggerel adorning Shaskper's grave, "And curst be he that moves my bones"?

*Contested Will* requires more attention than can be given to it here. Shapiro has gone beyond simply dismissing the huge body of authorship research and analysis out of hand, but not much beyond. For he does not fairly present the case for authorship, not even the basics. This book is essentially a work of specious scholarship since it does not address the issues or the real work done by Oxfordians but instead attacks Oxfordians. Shapiro's book needs analysis like that accorded Alan Nelson's *faux* biography *Monstrous Adversary*. Many of Shapiro's defenses of Shaksper are preposterous and contradictory, such as his contention that identifying an author by his pen-name is the equivalent of lying. When I refer to Mark Twain, I don't feel particularly guilty of subterfuge. In his lengthy section on Mark Twain, Shapiro refers to the author by his familiar pen name, almost never as Samuel Clemens.

Does that mean that Shapiro is lying through his teeth? So this is how one of the most renown self-appointed crusaders against Shakespeare authorship of our time makes the case to end all cases, to put an end to the authorship debate once and for all: by attacking its proponents. The problem with that approach is that there are more proponents, especially for Oxford, every day. Will Shapiro be delving into the personal obsessions of the Supreme Court justices who have declared reasonable doubt (and, in one case, *beyond* a reasonable doubt) against the Stratford man?

Sooner or later, orthodox defenders of the traditional bard like Professor Shapiro are going to have to face issues. Shapiro doesn't do it. He is chatty and breezy. But so was Bryson. At least Shapiro has some credentials. Oxfordians were hoping for better from this world-recognized Shakespeare expert. Get beyond the *ad hominem* attacks, however, and nothing much is there. Anyone who wants to learn about the history and current state of authorship research and analysis would do much better to read Warren Hope and Kim Holston's newly revised *The Shakespeare Controversy*. Shapiro's book is an attack, and attacks add nothing to the debate.

R. Thomas Hunter, PhD chairs the *Oberon Shakespeare Study Group*, which is devoted to the greater understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare through the authorship issue. Before the release of Shapiro's book, Hunter wrote, "Contesting Shapiro," in the Fall 2009 edition of the *Shakespeare Fellowship newsletter*, *Shakespeare Matters*. □

### "Shakespeare and the Apocrypha"

Summer Seminar (August 9-14, 2010) Concordia University, Portland, OR  
[www.authorshipstudies.org](http://www.authorshipstudies.org)

This year's seminar theme, directed by Dr. Daniel Wright, is "Shakespeare and the Apocrypha," with attention devoted to such works of contested Shakespearean authorship as *Arden of Feversham*, *Lochrine*, *Edward III*, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, *Fair Em* and others. The seminar is not offered for academic credit but pursues academic rigor in the study of selected topics relevant to resolution of the Shakespeare Authorship Question. Registrants will be sent recommended advance readings.



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