

Greed and Generosity in the Shakespearean Question

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Third Fisherman. Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea.

First Fisherman. Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the little ones. I can compare our rich misers to nothing so fitly as to a whale.

Pericles 2.1.69-70

“I know of no country, indeed, where the love of money has taken stronger hold on the affections of men, and where the profounder contempt is expressed for the theory of the permanent equality of property.”

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

Individual and corporate greed, along with growing income inequality, are plaguing the early 21st century in the United States. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, “rising income inequality is weighing on global economic growth and fueling political instability.”² Mentalization is emerging as a crucial feature of healthy psychological development.³ But many studies have shown that increased wealth correlates with decreasing empathy for those who have less.⁴ The wealthy are at risk of deceiving themselves into thinking they earned everything they possess through their talent and hard work alone, and that birth and luck played no role in their financial success. They tend to regard the poor as lazy and unworthy. And they compare themselves unfavorably to those who have still greater wealth.⁵ Giving to others seems to bring deeper satisfaction than keeping more for oneself. Paradoxically, the poorest people in the United States give a higher proportion of their income to charity than do the more prosperous.

Still, greed has its defenders. Ivan Boesky once said, "I think greed is healthy. You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself."⁶ This was a few months before he was fined \$100 million and sentenced to prison for insider trading. Although some apologists for the wealthy cite misleading statistics in order to deny that there is more income inequality now than there was fifty years ago, economists measure this inequality more objectively with the so-called "Gini coefficient." If incomes were completely identical, this measure would be zero, whereas it would be one if incomes were completely unequal. In the United States in 1960, the Gini coefficient was 0.34; in 2013 it was 0.42 (relatively speaking, a 24% increase in income disparity). Disturbingly, U.S. income inequality is greater than in any other wealthy country. Fifty years ago, the U.S. looked down on Latin America for having a group of very wealthy people, a small middle class, and a large number of poor. We no longer hear that comparison, as the U.S. more and more resembles that once derogated stereotype of Latin American dictatorships that favored the wealthy at the expense of everyone else. Our national identity and democratic values are built on the ideal of equality—that is, equality of opportunity, so anyone willing to study hard in school and work hard at their job can be financially secure. We are now at risk of losing the social cohesiveness that such an ideal facilitated, with only 9% of children born into the poorest fifth of the population ever rising to the top fifth.⁷ Three-fourths of those in the wealthiest *quarter* of the population finish college by age twenty-four, but fewer than 10% of those born into the poorest quarter do so.⁸

In understandable reaction against this ever-growing income inequality, socialism has been garnering increased support in the United States. A 2011 survey found that minority groups that have been most harmed by the wealth gap support socialism over capitalism. In a 2012 survey, 39% of all Americans polled expressed a positive opinion of socialism.⁹ A 2009 survey of 3,300 U.S. physicians revealed that 42% of them supported a "socialized," single-payer health care system.¹⁰

In this era of growing economic disparities, what could be more timely than an exploration of greed, viewed psychoanalytically? I will offer some suggestions as to what we might learn about this topic through the life and literary work of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), who wrote under the pen name "William Shake-speare," as well as under other pseudonyms (such as "Ignoto"). Given that he was a high ranking member of the nobility when feudal class distinctions were being challenged by the rising merchant class, it is remarkable that he suffered less from greed than did many of his contemporaries, including William Shakspeare of Stratford, who is still thought by many to be the author of the literary works that have so little in common with what we know about him. Thus, another necessary psychoanalytic aspect of this chapter must be some exploration of the individual and group psychology that helps us understand this monumental authorship misattribution.

For more than 150 years now, reasonable challenges to the traditional authorship theory have been met with avoidance on the part of Shakespeare scholars, or with ad hominem attacks on those who present evidence that contradicts the traditional theory. Instead, we are told repeatedly that only snobs who cannot stand the literary genius of the commoner from Stratford, and those given to

“conspiracy theories,” would dare to defy the authority of the Shakespeare experts as to his identity. Since those experts begin from the unquestioned premise that the traditional attribution is unequivocally correct, they unconsciously select from the mass of ambiguous but relevant evidence only those data that fit with their preconceptions, while they ignore, minimize, or ridicule inconsistent evidence and those who present it.¹¹ Further, there is a striking pattern of what seems to be unconscious projection of every one of the weaknesses of their own thinking onto authorship skeptics (e.g., faulty evaluation of evidence; biases from preconceptions; circular thinking; problems with the lifespan of the alleged author; elitism; and excessive emotional attachment to one’s theory).

Another approach, that is more consistent with the ideals of science and of objective literary scholarship, is to consider every theory a hypothesis, open to possible disproof. Starting by assuming that one’s conclusion is infallibly correct guarantees that one will reason deductively from axiomatic assumptions. Stratfordians (who believe that Shakspeare of Stratford was the author) demonstrate this fallacy repeatedly when they write about the authorship question. They assume, for example, that Shakspeare attended the local grammar school in Stratford, in the absence of any surviving records that might document his attendance. Even more basically, they assume he was highly literate, in the complete absence of any objective evidence that he knew how to read; or to write; or even to sign his name. The illiteracy of most English commoners in his day, including his parents and his children, instead suggests that he may not have been able to read the works of Shakespeare, much less to write them. There is no shame in that.

In fact, a more objective appraisal of the authorship question suggests that Edward de Vere wrote the plays of “Shakespeare” because this was the best way to shape public opinion, in a day when the many people who could not read could still enjoy—and be influenced by—the public theater. Plays remain even today a collective literary experience that harkens back to Homeric and other ancient epics being recited aloud to a group of people. Queen Elizabeth may have provided financial support to de Vere with the understanding that his plays would help legitimize her rule and that of her Tudor predecessors. His history plays would be more effective as propaganda if they were widely thought to be written by a commoner from Stratford.

Initially, it was assumed that Shakespeare had “little Latin and less Greek,” as Ben Jonson wrote in the 1623 First Folio collection of Shakespeare’s plays. Scholars’ flawed assumptions about what works Shakespeare may have read in other languages therefore narrowed our awareness of his actual literary sources. More recent evidence suggests, however, that Shakespeare the author read works in Latin, Greek, French, and Italian that had not yet been translated into English. For example, an entire scene of *Henry V* is written in French, including some bawdy puns. Shakspeare of Stratford’s coat of arms, finally granted in 1596 after several earlier refusals, has the motto “non sans droit,” ostensibly French for “not without right.” Many Shakespeare scholars agree that this motto is ridiculed in Ben Jonson’s comedy *Every Man Out of his Humor* as “not without mustard.”¹² Intriguingly, post-Stratfordian scholars (who question the traditional authorship theory) speculate that the illiterate

Shakspere misunderstood the words “non, sans droit” (i.e., “no, he has no right” [to a coat of arms]) on his initially rejected application for a coat of arms. There are even characters in Shakespeare’s plays, such as Christopher Sly in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and the clown Costard in *Love’s Labors Lost*,¹³ who seem to be caricatures of Shakspere.

Shakespeare scholars often maintain that no one challenged the traditional authorship theory until the mid-19th century. That is not so, however. For example, Thomas Vicars referred in 1628 to “that famous poet who takes his name from shaking and spear” [“celebrem illum poeta qui a quassatione et hasta nomen habet”].¹⁴ This circumlocution sounds very odd if the poet to which he referred were Shakspere. The other poets that Vicars lists are referred to by their actual names. So Vicars’s unusual allusion to Shakespeare is more consistent with “Shake-spear” being a pen name, especially since hyphenated last names in Elizabethan literature (including those in many Shakespeare plays) were usually assumed names.

The documentary evidence from Shakespeare’s own day proves that de Vere was known as an excellent author of comedies and courtly poems, who preferred to write anonymously. But it offers no proof whatsoever that Shakspere was an author. However, there is ample evidence that Shakspere of Stratford was a notoriously greedy and unscrupulous businessman. Business success required numeracy, but not literacy. Shakspere was a moneylender, and he may have become involved with the London theater by lending money to those who staged plays there. His father John’s application for a coat of arms in the late 1560s was rejected because of the father’s violation of laws concerning usury, and for illegal activity in his wool trade. In 1598, when food was in short supply, William Shakspere was accused of illegally hoarding more than three tons of malt.¹⁵ In 1600, he sued a man in London for repayment of a debt of £7. In 1604, he sued another man for a debt of little more than £1; in 1608, a third man for £6. These suits help document his occupation as a moneylender, whereas there is no unequivocal documentation that he was a writer.

Shakspere’s unsavory side received widespread publicity in 2013, when scholars from Britain’s Aberystwyth University made international news by reporting evidence that, “There was another side to Shakespeare [sic] besides the brilliant playwright—as a ruthless businessman who did all he could to avoid taxes, maximise profits at others’ expense and exploit the vulnerable....”¹⁶

It has emerged that, over a fifteen-year period, Stratford’s Shakspere repeatedly bought grain to hoard and resell at inflated prices. He was fined for this, as well as threatened with jail for tax evasion. Trying to put the best face on this disappointing information about a man who is still regarded by many as a major cultural icon, the researchers claimed that he was just trying to feed his family. However, we should ask ourselves: if we did not assume that Shakspere wrote the works of Shakespeare, does this sound like the author of these beloved works?

When this story was in the news in 2013, one commentator praised Shakspere’s business acumen, for buying grain when prices were low, and holding out for the highest possible prices. If we wish to judge Shakspere solely by such standards of greedy business practices, we can praise him. But it further weakens his claim to

authorship of the literary works that consistently honor generosity, and condemn greed.

You may be wondering why you have never heard about this documentary evidence of Shakspere's business career. Perhaps because it makes it seem less likely that he had time to write the works of Shakespeare. Shakespeare experts have systematically ignored all evidence inconsistent with their authorship theory, while turning their speculations into ostensible "facts." At his death, Shakspere left an estate of some £2,000. Writers were paid little; Ben Jonson earned a total of about £200 from *all* of his writing. Fellow theater investors left much smaller estates than did Shakspere (except those whose wives were wealthy in their own right). There are records of payments to other playwrights, but none to Shakespeare.¹⁷

What evidence do we have of de Vere's personal generosity or greed? In Sidney Lee's 1899 biography of de Vere, written some twenty years before de Vere was first proposed as author of Shakespeare's works, Lee wrote of de Vere as an adolescent, "While manifesting a natural taste for music and literature, the youth developed a waywardness of temper which led him into every form of extravagance."¹⁸ When he was older, Lee said, "Oxford's continued extravagance involved him in pecuniary difficulties....[He] seemed to take delight in selling every acre of his land at ruinously low prices.... Oxford had squandered some part of his fortune upon men of letters whose bohemian mode of life attracted him."

Lee could be sharply critical of de Vere's many personal failings, but he did acknowledge de Vere's generosity and artistic talents—for music, the theater, and literature. Lee wrote,

Oxford—despite his violent and perverse temper [that included a homicidal streak], his eccentric taste in dress, and his reckless waste of his substance—evinced a genuine interest in music, and wrote verse of much lyric beauty. Puttenham and Meres reckon him among "the best for comedy" in his day; but, although he was a patron of a company of players [i.e., actors], no specimens of his dramatic productions survive. A sufficient number of his poems is extant, however, to corroborate Webbe's comment that he was the best of the courtier-poets in the early years of Elizabeth's reign.

Some leading Elizabethan authors such as John Lyly and Anthony Munday served as de Vere's literary secretaries. One book that Munday translated became a source for Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. In the 1580s, de Vere's home was at Fisher's Folly in London, where he welcomed still other writers, such as Robert Greene and Barnabe Riche. A 1598 account reported that the Queen "hath lodged there [i.e., at Fisher's Folly]."¹⁹

Thirty-three books were dedicated to de Vere during his lifetime, "an unusually large proportion of which were literary."²⁰ Thirteen of Shakespeare's plays are set in Italy (aside from the history plays, only one play is set in England). So it is noteworthy that "a large share of [de Vere's] patronage was extended in particular to literary works with an Italian flavor" (Dunn, 3). It is likely that this reflects not only

his financial generosity to fellow writers, but also his encouragement of their work. In another act of generosity and patronage, de Vere gave the lease of his Battails Hall estate in Essex to the famous composer William Byrd, around 1573. (More about Byrd below.)

Every single Shakespeare play contains music or refers to music. Many figures of speech in Shakespeare use musical terms—always correctly. Christopher Wilson wrote that “nearly every composer, since Shakespeare’s time had been inspired, directly or indirectly, by our poet.”²¹ The Elizabethan composer John Farmer said de Vere’s musical talents rivaled those of professional musicians. Farmer dedicated two published collections of music to de Vere, in 1591 and in 1599. By 1599, de Vere’s precarious finances made it unlikely he could have offered much financial reward as a patron. Nonetheless, Farmer wrote an extraordinary dedication to de Vere that year. It is worth quoting at some length, since it helps us understand de Vere’s contemporary reputation as a generous, leading patron of literature and music:

There is a canker worm that breedeth in many minds, feeding only upon forgetfulness, and bringing forth no birth but ingratitude. To show that I have not been bitten with that monster (for worms prove monsters in this age, which yet never any Painter could counterfeit to express the ugliness, nor any Poet describe to decipher the height of their illness) I have presumed to tender these Madrigals only as remembrances of my service and witnesses of your Lordship’s liberal hand [i.e., de Vere’s financial generosity to Farmer], by which I have so long lived, and from your Honorable mind that so much have loved all liberal Sciences.²²

De Vere’s annotated Geneva Bible is another crucial window into his mind. One of my favorite Biblical stories (2 Samuel 12:1-14) about telling truth to power is when the prophet Nathan wants to confront King David with his evildoing. He does this so subtly that David falls into his trap, ordering the execution of the disguised “rich man” with many sheep, who stole the one “little sheep” the “poor” man owned. When David ordered that the rich man “shall surely die” (verse 5), Nathan replied “Thou art the man” (verse 7)—the story was an allegory about David seizing the beautiful Bathsheba to satisfy his lust, and having her husband Uriah killed in battle. De Vere marked several phrases in verses 9, 10, and 11 in this chapter, which describe David’s sin and how he would be punished.

De Vere annotated only one verse in the entire Gospel of Mark. It was chapter 10, verse 21, which states, “And Jesus beheld him [the rich man], and loved him, and said unto him, one thing is lacking unto thee, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me, and take up the cross.” As a “rich man” himself, it is understandable that de Vere would have special interest in this well-known story. De Vere also marked Matthew 19:21, a paraphrase of that verse in Mark. A printed marginal note next to this verse in Matthew, however, reassures the wealthy that Jesus was “not generally

commanding all to do the like.”²³ De Vere did not literally follow Jesus’s advice, but his interest in Mark 10:21, out of that entire Gospel, shows that he was acutely aware of the spiritual hazards of being excessively attached to wealth. And he did indeed act charitably as a literary patron.

As King Lear is about to seek shelter in Mad Tom’s hovel during the storm of Act III, he has an epiphany about his previous neglect of the poor. His words may be inspired partly by Mark 10:21 and Matthew 19:21, the verses that so interested de Vere: “Poor naked wretches, wheresoe’er you are,/ That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm...O, I have ta’en/ Too little care of this! Take physic,²⁴ pomp,/ Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,/ That thou mayst shake the superflux²⁵ to them,/ And show the heavens more just” (III.iv.28-36). Later, Lear literally disrobes, exposing himself indeed. However, despite his effort to feel what Mad Tom feels, Lear is still trapped in his own subjectivity, as he assumes Mad Tom surely must have also been betrayed by *his* three daughters to be brought to his (feigned) madness: “nothing could have subdu’d nature/ To such a lowness but his unkind daughters” (III.iv.70-71).

De Vere showed special interest in biblical passages that dealt with usury, the poor, and the giving of alms.²⁶ For example, Matthew 6:1-4 deals with the correct way to give alms, and each of these four verse numbers is marked in his Bible. These verses exhort the righteous to give alms in secret—“That thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father that seeth in secret, he will reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:4). Did de Vere interpret these verses as encouraging him to remain anonymous with his literary gifts to mankind? Perhaps.

Another source of information about de Vere is his letters. We might note his eighteen uses of various forms of the word “fortune” in his letters—including “misfortune,” “unfortunate,” etc. In his 1603 letter to his wife’s brother Robert Cecil about Queen Elizabeth’s death, he crossed out the word “fortune” because he had already used it so many times earlier in the letter; he signed this letter “your unfortunate brother-in-law.” In de Vere’s day, the word “fortune” usually meant luck—good or bad. The OED’s first example of its use in the modern sense of fortune as wealth is in Edmund Spenser’s 1590 *The Fairy Queen*.²⁷ But de Vere was himself already using the word in that modern sense in his letters. I suspect he used the word so many times in his letter about the Queen’s death because he worried what impact her death would have on his luck—and on his economic status. After all, she had been paying him an unprecedented pension of £1,000 per year since 1586.

De Vere’s personality had all the contradictions of a Shakespearean character. His attitude toward money is but one example. He could be generous to a fault. As noted earlier, Sidney Lee tells us that “Oxford had squandered some part of his fortune upon men of letters whose bohemian mode of life attracted him,” like Prince Hal in the Boar’s Head Tavern (in *Henry IV, Part II*). Since his adolescence, he spent lavishly on his clothing. He showed no regard for the impact on his finances of his fourteen-month trip to the Continent when he was 25 and 26. He was successful in his appeal to the Queen for his generous pension, but he was apparently unsuccessful in his many bids for other royal favors that would have been profitable to him. He showed poor judgment in his investments in risky ventures, such as Martin

Frobisher's expedition to the New World.

De Vere had good reason to consider himself to be a repeated victim of the greed of other people. De Vere's repeated suits to the Queen for financial assistance were fully justified, once one considers her role in causing his financial ruin. Nina Green, in an important article, concludes that "It was the Queen's mismanagement of de Vere's wardship and the stranglehold which she held over his finances during his entire lifetime which led inevitably to his financial ruin" (60). De Vere's father John died when de Vere was only twelve. Green builds a plausible case that John de Vere may have been murdered at the behest of Robert Dudley (who later became Earl of Leicester).²⁸ Dudley was Queen Elizabeth's favorite, and possibly her lover. He profited financially from the death of de Vere's father, after the Queen assigned the management and income of much of de Vere's land to him.

The Court of Wards was set up to "protect" and educate noble children who lost their fathers. But it allowed the nearly unrestrained financial exploitation of these children. Always struggling with her own financial problems, Queen Elizabeth was creative in rewarding her favorites by granting them royal commercial monopolies—or awarding them guardianship of a wealthy "orphan." This is precisely what happened to de Vere when he was twelve and his father died. Green has shown how badly de Vere was harmed financially by the wardship system—he owed £11,000 to the Court of Wards when he attained his majority. This unscrupulous system is the veiled target of Shakespeare's first long poem, the 1593 *Venus and Adonis*, according to the Stratfordian scholar Patrick M. Murphy.²⁹ But, as early as 1576, de Vere wrote to his father-in-law, Lord Burghley (who was formerly his guardian after his father died), "I understand the greatness of my debt and [the] *greediness* of my creditors grows so dishonorable to me" that he asked that some of his lands be sold to pay them, "to stop my creditors' exclamations³⁰ (or rather defamations I may call them)" (quoted in Green, 59; emphasis added).

The celebrated physician and humanitarian Paul Farmer has helped popularize a folk saying from Haiti—the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere—that God gives mankind all it needs, but He leaves it up to us to share our resources fairly.³¹ Greed corrupts this moral obligation of those who have more to share with those who have less. Greed typically refers to the inordinate desire for wealth, in contrast with excessive ambition, which craves inordinate power, as do many of Shakespeare's characters. Shakespeare's contemporary Ben Jonson wrote the comedy *The Alchemist*, considered to be one of his best plays, as a satire on greed. Shakespeare did not write such a play himself. His plays are full of ambition and its casualties. When asked about the topic of greed in Shakespeare, many people first think of his unforgettable Falstaff, and of Shylock. It is true that Falstaff is an unscrupulous glutton, but one does not think of financial greed as his central characteristic. Gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins, and greed is another.

I come now to Shylock's play, *The Merchant of Venice*. Its character Antonio displays the sort of reckless generosity toward his friend Bassanio that Lee described in de Vere "squandering" some of his fortune on fellow writers. In fact, this play has special significance to the theory that de Vere wrote the works of Shakespeare.

Thomas Looney, whose 1920 book³² persuaded Freud of de Vere's likely authorship, explained that it was his experience teaching this play in a secondary school year after year that made him realize how implausible the traditional authorship theory was:

This long continued familiarity with the contents of one play [*The Merchant of Venice*] induced a peculiar sense of intimacy with the mind and disposition of its author and his outlook upon life. The personality which seemed to run through the pages of the drama I felt to be altogether out of relationship with what was taught of the reputed author and the ascertained facts of his career....This particular play...bespoke a writer who knew Italy at first hand and was touched with the life and spirit of the country. Again the play suggested an author with no great respect for money and business methods, but rather one to whom material possessions would be in the nature of an encumbrance. (2)

Looney recognized some of the psychological factors that create such strong belief in Shakspeare of Stratford, and that might interfere with an objective evaluation of his competing authorship theory. For example, "The force of a conviction is frequently due as much to the manner in which the evidence presents itself, as to the intrinsic value of the evidence" (4). Thus, when one starts with unshakeable faith in the traditional theory, one will overemphasize those facts which seem to support it, and downplay facts that are inconsistent with it.

The Stratfordian authorship theory leads to the false assumption that Shakespeare did not know any Jews in England, which in turn promotes the misreading of the play as exploiting bigoted stereotypes of Jews. In reality, de Vere had many opportunities to become acquainted with Jews during the several months he lived in Venice, in 1576.

Charlton Ogburn, Jr., who is largely responsible for revival of interest in Looney's authorship theory since the 1980s, uses *The Merchant of Venice* to illustrate Shakespeare's firsthand knowledge of Italy:

Hugh R. Trevor-Roper writes that Shakespeare's "knowledge of Italy was extraordinary. An English scholar who lived in Venice has found his visual topographic exactitude in *The Merchant of Venice* incredible in one who had never been there." Dr. Ernesto Grillo in his *Shakespeare and Italy...says of *The Merchant* that "the topography is so precise and accurate that it must convince even the most superficial reader that the poet visited the country" (302).³³*

Shylock has stimulated more books than has the play in which he is found.³⁴ As Thomas Wheeler observed, "The dark shadow of the Holocaust falls about *The Merchant*... and makes it... impossible to regard [Shylock] as a comic villain" (xi). In contrast with the protagonist of Christopher Marlowe's earlier play, *The Jew of Malta*, Shylock demonstrates far more complexity. He is not as purely a villain

as is Marlowe's Barabas. Wheeler quotes A.D. Moody, who saw *The Merchant of Venice* as "a disturbing play in which tensions between two different standards [of Belmont and of Venice] are never resolved....[The final act] reveals the hypocrisy and superficiality of the Christians, who have triumphed by ignoring the spirit of mercy and conforming to the letter of the law" (xi). J. M. Murry wrote in 1936, "Antonio and his friends ...do not realize... that their morality is essentially no finer than Shylock's" (49).³⁵ Norman Rabkin, in a wonderful 1972 essay on the play, wrote, "At every point at which we want simplicity we get complexity. Some signals point to coherence.... But just as many create discomfort, point to centrifugality..." (121, in Wheeler, 1991).

What about Shylock's ostensible greed? There are few plays of Shakespeare that are as controversial as this one, due to its ostensible antisemitism. What is often overlooked, though, is that Shakespeare uses the blatant antisemitism in this play not to express his own bigotry, but to hold a mirror up to the audience, to help us see it in ourselves; to help us understand the dynamics underlying antisemitism, not to promote it.

Further, he does so precisely to help us see how Christians project their own disavowed greed onto Jews. The actor Al Pacino refused offers to play the role of Shylock, until he changed his mind about the play's ostensible antisemitism. He then gave a wonderful performance in Michael Radford's 2004 film version.

Antonio self-righteously boasts that he never lends money at interest. In the Middle Ages, Christians were not allowed to charge interest, so Jews filled the void and served as moneylenders. It was a 1545 law under Henry VIII that made it legal to charge interest in England. When this play was written, the maximum legal interest rate in England was 10%; only charging more interest than that was condemned as usury.

Portia's many fortune-hunting suitors, and Antonio's pursuit of great wealth through foreign trade, are but some of the instances of gentile greed depicted in the play. In many productions, Shylock is made sympathetic by end of the play, just as Malvolio is in *Twelfth Night*. We recoil at our own vicarious cruelty toward these victims, however much we scorned them earlier in the plays. It is just these sequences of contrasting emotions that Shakespeare exploits with genius.

In his play *Timon of Athens*, de Vere offers a plausible self-portrait of his own charity run amok. Timon gives away so much of his wealth that he ruins himself financially. Like Timon, de Vere ignored his servants' attempts to warn him of his financial recklessness before it was too late. It was the unrestrained greed of Timon's "friends" that ruined him, as they exploited his generosity by demanding more and more expensive gifts from him.

People sometimes ask, "What difference does it make who wrote Shakespeare?" This is usually a not-so-veiled defense of the traditional authorship theory. But, however rhetorical its intent, this question has many serious answers. One has to do with the possibility that our conception of the Shakespeare canon is far too narrow—that the author wrote many not yet identified works, in addition to the known plays and poems. Among other things, identifying these other works gives

us a more realistic picture of the gradual development of his peerless creative skill. He was writing and translating poetry since his adolescence. His well-known plays and poems are the product of his mature years (though some “Shakespeare” plays were probably revisions of much earlier “anonymous” plays that he wrote when he was younger).

In Act III of *Henry VIII*, the corrupt Cardinal Wolsey makes a fatal paraproxia. In giving the King some official documents to read, he inadvertently includes a secret inventory of his vast, stolen wealth. It is as though his unconscious wish to flaunt his riches before the King gets the better of his conflicting wish to conceal his crimes. Alternatively, his superego may be unconsciously arranging for appropriate punishment for his astonishing greed.

Reading this shocking inventory, the King exclaims, “What piles of wealth he hath accumulated/ To his own portion!” (III.ii.7-8). After the King asks if anyone has seen Wolsey, the Duke of Norfolk finishes his reply with the words, “In most strange postures/ We have seen him *set himself*” (III.ii.117-118). De Vere’s biblical annotations shed light on those last two words. Although these two words may seem trivial, de Vere was extraordinarily verbal, perhaps with a photographic memory for everything he read. The phrase “set himself” does not occur in the Geneva Old or New Testament. But it is found in 2 Esdras, in the Apocrypha. De Vere underlined many entire verses of chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Esdras. Chapter 8 proclaims that “There be many created, but few shall be saved” (verse 3). All the words of verse 6 were underlined by de Vere. The verse says, “O Lord, if thou suffer not thy servant, that we may entreat Thee, that thou mayst give seed to our heart, and prepare our understanding, that there may come fruit of it, whereby every one which is corrupt, may live, who [other than God] can *set himself* for man?”³⁶ In fact, in keeping with this verse, the exposure of Wolsey’s corruption leads to his contrition.

De Vere underlined the words “The plowmen that till the ground” in 2 Esdras 15:13. He also drew a pointing hand in the margin next to these words. This was the only time he drew a “manicule” in the margin, other than in his Whole Book of Psalms (bound with his Bible).³⁷ Verse 13 in its entirety says, “*The plowmen that till the ground* shall mourn: for their seeds shall fail through the blasting and hail, and by a horrible star” (emphasis added). The emphasized words are strikingly similar to the first words of de Vere’s commendatory poem at the beginning of the 1573 English translation of *Cardanus Comfort*, whose publication de Vere arranged.³⁸ Here are the poem’s first four lines (emphasis added):

*The labouring man, that tills the fertile soil,
And reaps the harvest fruit, hath not indeed
The gain but pain, and if for all his toil
He gets the straw, the lord [i.e., the master] will have the seed.*

Clearly, the first line of the poem paraphrases the first words of the verse—the very words de Vere underlined. And the first verse of the poem generally parallels the content of the verse. These close parallels, by the way, help refute Shakespeare

scholars who have tried to claim that a later owner of de Vere's Bible underlined verses that reminded him or her of Shakespeare's works (typical of Stratfordian circular thinking at its worst). More significantly, de Vere's poem echoes the biblical concern with injustice. The biblical verse reassures the righteous that God will punish iniquity; de Vere's poem describes in detail the injustices caused by class and economic differences.³⁹ Similarly, some of Shakespeare's sonnets echo the laments of psalms he marked in his *Whole Book of Psalms*, while omitting the reassurance that follows in those psalms.

In doing research for this chapter, I came across lyrics that were set to music by the composer William Byrd. As you will recall, Byrd was on such good terms with de Vere that de Vere gave him the lease of one of his estates. It is known that Byrd set some of de Vere's poems to music (e.g., "If Women Could Be Fair and Never Fond"). There are probably more as yet unattributed de Vere poems among Byrd's song lyrics.⁴⁰ In Byrd's 1588 collection, *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs of Sadness and Piety*, the first secular poem begins, "I joy not in earthly bliss,/ I force not Croesus' wealth a straw..."⁴¹ A few lines later are words that may capture de Vere's sentiments about excessive wealth: "I scorn no poor, nor fear no rich;/ I feel not want, nor have too much."⁴² The poem's final phrase is "I find/ No wealth is like the quiet mind."

In conclusion, a study of greed and generosity in the works of Shakespeare supports the theory Freud endorsed that these works were probably written by Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. De Vere followed a consistent pattern in writing words in his Geneva Bible. He wrote them only in the left and right margins, and they were all key words in passages that interested him. With only one exception: it is the word "*continue*," written *above* a verse whose number is underlined. This is in the Apocrypha, in a book that is known to be an important source for Shakespeare's works. Ecclesiasticus 11:21 exhorts the righteous, "Marvel not at the works of sinners, but trust in the Lord, and abide in thy labor: for it is an easy thing in the sight of the Lord suddenly to make a poor man rich." De Vere may have found in this verse inspiration to "*continue*" with his anonymous literary labors, in the assurance that God would see them and would one day reward him—in his heavenly and literary afterlife, if not while he lived.

[Editor's note: This article was originally published in Salman Akhtar, ed., *Greed: Developmental, Cultural, and Clinical Realms* (Karnac Books, 2015)]

Endnotes

- ¹ For the full text of most of Dr. Waugaman's sixty publications on Shakespeare and on the psychology of pseudonymity, see his Georgetown Faculty website, <http://explore.georgetown.edu/people/waugamar/>
- ² March 13, 2014, online article by Ian Talley, "IMF Escalates Focus on Income Inequality," retrieved March 13, 2014.
- ³ See Peter Fonagy, "On Tolerating Mental States: Theory of Mind in Borderline Personality," *Bulletin of the Anna Freud Centre*, 12:91-115 (1989).
- ⁴ Daniel Goleman, "Rich People Just Care Less." *New York Times*, October 5, 2013.
- ⁵ One thinks of the owners of the two largest private yachts in the world, who seem anxious that the other one will build a yacht larger than theirs. See "Ruling the Waves: The £390 Million, 590 Foot Super-Yacht that has Knocked Roman Abramovich's Eclipse Off the Top Spot." *Mail Online*, August 14, 2013.
- ⁶ Commencement address at University of California's School of Business Administration, May 18, 1986.
- ⁷ "A Memo to Obama." *The Economist*, March 1, 2014, 25.
- ⁸ Suzane Mettler, "College, the Great Unlever." *New York Times*, March 1, 2014.
- ⁹ *The Nation*, December 16, 2013, "Socialist in Seattle," 4.
- ¹⁰ Danny McCormick et al., "U.S. Physicians' Views of Financing Options to Expand Health Insurance Coverage: A National Survey," *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 24:526-531 (2009).
- ¹¹ Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells (eds.) attempted to prove that the traditional theory is beyond dispute in their 2013 book *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, which I reviewed in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 62(1):180-186 (2014).
- ¹² The buffoon Sogliardo (Shakspeare?) has paid £30 for his coat of arms, and has chosen this motto. He explains that the crest of his coat of arms shows "a boar without a head." A boar was the de Vere family's heraldic animal. Another

character replies, “I commend the herald’s wit, he has deciphered him well: a swine without a head, without brain, wit, anything indeed, ramping to gentility” (III.i).

- ¹³ In *The Taming of the Shrew*, a Lord (de Vere?) finds the drunken beggar Sly passed out in front of a tavern where he refused to pay his bill, and plays an elaborate practical joke on Sly, having the Lord’s servants treat Sly as if he himself was a “mighty lord.” Costard is called “that unlettered small-knowing soul” (I.i.251). Costard uses the word “remuneration” nine of the twelve times it occurs in Shakespeare’s works.
- ¹⁴ In *Cheiragogia Manuductio ad Artem Rhetoricam* (London: Augustini Matthews, 3d ed., 70). See Fred Schurink, “An Unnoticed Early Reference to Shakespeare.” *Notes & Queries* 53(1):72-75 (2006). One wonders if this early allusion to Shakespeare remained “unnoticed” until 2006 because it might cast doubt on the traditional authorship theory.
- ¹⁵ In *Coriolanus*, a citizen protests that the wealthy patricians “ne’er cared for us yet: suffer us to famish, and their store-houses crammed with grain” (I.i.80-81).
- ¹⁶ Quoting Jayne Archer, a researcher in Renaissance literature at Aberystwyth. In online *Telegraph*, March 31, 2013 (accessed February 27, 2014).
- ¹⁷ For details on Shakspeare’s business career and financial success, see Anthony Poin-ton, *The Man Who Was Never Shakespeare*, Tunbridge Wells, UK: Parapress (2011).
- ¹⁸ In online *Dictionary of National Biography*, retrieved March 8, 2014.
- ¹⁹ Charlton Ogburn, Jr., *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*. McLean, VA: EPM Publications, 671.
- ²⁰ Jonnie Lea Dunn, *The Literary Patronage of Edward de Vere*, Master’s Thesis, University of Texas at Arlington (1999). Dunn speculates about why scholars of Elizabethan literature have not dealt with this fact: “It is ...likely that, because of his being put forward as a candidate for authorship of the Shakespeare plays, some scholars feel called upon to savage his reputation and overlook his patronage rather than assess its scope and influence” (2).
- ²¹ In *Shakesepare and Music*, London: The Stage (1922).
- ²² *The First Set of English Madrigals*. London: William Barley (1599), 1.
- ²³ Although de Vere underlined some of the printed marginal notes, he did not underline those adjoining Matthew 19:21.
- ²⁴ Medical treatment.
- ²⁵ An excess amount of something—in this case, wealth—but also playing on the excess rain of the storm.

- ²⁶ “Almes” is the largest of all the words that de Vere wrote in the margins of his Geneva Bible.
- ²⁷ Spenser wrote a dedicatory poem to de Vere in this book; and “Ignoto” (de Vere) contributed a commendatory poem to it as well.
- ²⁸ “The Fall of the House of Oxford.” *Brief Chronicles: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Authorship Studies* 1:41-95 (2009).
- ²⁹ “Wriothesley’s Resistance: Wardship Practices and Ovidian Narratives in Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*.” In Philip C. Kolin (ed.), *Venus and Adonis: Critical Essays*. London: Routledge (1997).
- ³⁰ This use of “exclamation” meaning a “loud complaint” was used only *once* in the 436 books printed in 1576 that are digitized in Early English Books Online [EEBO] database, but the OED records that it was used in that sense in Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII* (1.2.59). This is but one small example of the striking verbal parallels between the writings of de Vere and those of “Shakespeare.” Not surprising, if de Vere wrote those works.
- ³¹ In Haitian Creole, “Bondye bay, men li pa konn separe.”
- ³² “*Shakespeare Identified in Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*. London: Cecil Palmer (1920).
- ³³ *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*. McLean, VA: EPM Publications (1984).
- ³⁴ Thomas Wheeler, ed., *The Merchant of Venice: Critical Essays*. New York: Garland (1991), ix.0.
- ³⁵ In Wheeler, 1991.
- ³⁶ I.e., to cause one’s affections to center upon man (OED 37.a.).
- ³⁷ Further, he drew a vertical dotted line next to this verse, leaving little doubt as to his strong interest in its message.
- ³⁸ And whose translation may be his own, knowing his pattern of publishing anonymously, and of attributing his own works to others.
- ³⁹ Roger Stritmatter connected the same de Vere poem with another passage from the same chapter of 2 Esdras—verses 33-38, in his “The Biblical Origin of Edward de Vere’s Dedicatory Poem in Cardan’s *Comforte*.” *The Oxfordian* 1:53-63 (1998).
- ⁴⁰ This surmise is consistent with Thomas Nashe’s dedication of his 1593 *Strange News* “To the most copious Carminist of our time,” thought by some as an allusion to de Vere. “Carmen” is Latin for “poem or song”; “Carminare” means “making verses or songs”; “carminist” thus seems to refer de Vere writing

verse as lyrics for songs.

- ⁴¹ That latter phrase means “I attach no importance to Croesus’s wealth.” The same expression is used in Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece*: “I force not argument a straw” (line 1021). Once again, we see an uncommon usage that makes authorship by the same writer more plausible.
- ⁴² The next line, “The court and cart I [neither] like nor loath,” brings up a central antithesis of 1589 *The Arte of English Poesie*, an important book I have attributed to de Vere. Although the poem is sometimes attributed to Edward Dyer, it is found in many manuscript collections along with poems of de Vere. Bear in mind that his authorship sometimes had to be hidden due to the so-called “stigma of print” for noblemen such as the Earl of Oxford.