

New Discoveries about the Authorship of Shakespeare's Works

Richard M. Waugaman

I feel deeply honored to be selected as this year's speaker.* It was 35 years ago that my wife Elisabeth and I attended our first

Frieda Fromm-Reichmann lecture, when her former patient Joanne Greenberg was the speaker. I'm grateful to Ann Silver, her committee, and our Center for giving me this opportunity to speak about a topic that's dear to my heart. And a topic that Ann has championed in many ways. Ann was instrumental in paving the way for my first psychoanalytic publication on the authorship of Shakespeare's works. I don't have time to thank the many of you who have encouraged my Shakespeare research. But I must thank my wife Elisabeth, whose Ph.D. is in medieval literature. She has been consistently courageous in supporting my controversial work, and she often keeps track of the relevant facts better than I do.



Frieda Fromm-Reichmann

I also want to thank our colleague Bob Ursano. Bob edits the journal *Psychiatry*, in which Frieda published nine of her articles. One year after I got involved in Shakespeare research, Bob generously gave me my first opportunity to publish on Shakespeare, when he invited me to write a commentary on an article about using Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to teach psychiatric interviewing skills.

After 13 years on the staff of Chestnut Lodge, I went into full-time private practice in 1999. The Lodge was a vastly important institutional transference object for me since I was 16, and I read *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*. As I told its author Joanne Greenberg when I had the privilege of meeting her, I mistakenly thought her memoir was a novel. When I learned a few years later it was about an actual hospital, Chestnut Lodge became a unique place for me, midway between the beloved bookish world of my imagination and the world of "reality."

* The Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Lecture, March 2, 2012, originally entitled "A Refugee from Chestnut Lodge Receives Asylum at the Folger Library: New Discoveries about the Authorship of Shakespeare's Works."

A Daft Lecture

I should confess at this point that when I was on the staff of the Lodge, my presentations tended to be poorly organized. In the meantime, though, I've spent 13 years with the New Directions Program, ostensibly as a faculty member. We've had many professional writing teachers hone our writing skills. They've drummed into us the need to follow an outline. So let me try.

First, I will free associate about my topic. Next, I plan to ramble a bit. Then I will go off on various tangents. In conclusion, I will attempt to improvise a synthesis of what I've said, leaving anything I've left out to the discussion period.

Another piece of advice I followed from New Directions was to get feedback on a preliminary version of this talk. Once he'd read it, a friend emailed me, "I have read your daft lecture." I think he meant draft. Now, cynics may think it was a parapraxis. But my friend is much too well analyzed to have made a Freudian slap. What he advised me was to be more impartial in reviewing both sides of the authorship debate. Good debaters are able to take the other side in a dispute, and articulate the best arguments for their opponents. So let me give it a try. Mind you, I'm now going to channel a famous Stratfordian, that is, someone who endorses the traditional authorship theory that Shakespeare from Stratford wrote the canon. I want to be sure that I'm being fair to his side in this.



Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare!

Let me just say, there is no doubt whatsoever—Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare. Need I say more? Authorship skeptics obviously do not know how to evaluate the evidence. They claim that someone named Edward must have written the works, because that name occurs 165 times in the canon, whereas the name William only occurs 38 times. Typical! We wouldn't allow a freshman in an English course to get by with such shoddy reasoning. Skeptics don't seem to realize that Shakespeare was known by his nickname, and the word "will" occurs over 4,000 times in the canon! Since we know with

absolute certainty that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare, we know that the name "William Shakespeare" in Elizabethan books must have referred to the man from Stratford. Therefore, we know a priori that any so-called "evidence" that anyone else wrote these works is false. In fact, we don't have to waste our time even looking at it. Anyone who is someone in this field knows that only elitists could doubt that a commoner wrote these works. And why are so many people suddenly raising questions about it? The internet is all very well and good, but people are misusing it to spread lies about Shakespeare! Who is behind it, is what I want to know! Only a conspiracy theorist could claim that an Earl wrote the works of

Shakespeare! A conspiracy theorist who's on the lunatic fringe! That's right—lunatic! Now, it may be true that I was paid a \$1 million dollar advance for my book *Will of the Wisp*. But that's only reasonable, because people hunger to know more facts about Will Shakespeare. More facts than we have, unfortunately, so I naturally had to speculate a bit, but all in the service of the truth.

Circular Reasoning

There. That pretty much sums up the other side. Once at you look closely at their “evidence,” it's mostly based on tradition and on circular reasoning. Let me return to the Lodge. At least figuratively speaking. If an institution can be eccentric, the Lodge was. It encouraged its patients *and* staff to be themselves, and its distinctive milieu lessened feelings of shame about any lack of conformity of one's true self to societal expectations. Lodge therapists were toughened by the humbling challenges of trying to help severely treatment-resistant patients, knowing that our work was regarded skeptically by many analysts and other mental health professionals. The Lodge's atmosphere was perfect for stimulating creativity. The milieu that promoted the recovery of our chronically ill patients also nurtured the development of the staff.

“I have to tell you, belief in de Vere as author of Shakespeare's works is like a belief in UFO's. I'm not going to publish your flight of fancy. It's hogwash. You're in the grip of a delusional belief.”

Once I left the Lodge, I needed new interests to fill the void it left in my life. Around the same time, legitimate controversies about publishing clinical material led me to decide to stop writing clinical articles, much as I love to write. Then, a 2002 article in the *New York Times* intrigued me so much that I saved it. The article cited new evidence to support Sigmund Freud's much derided belief that the works of “Shakespeare” were in fact written by Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford (1550-1604). The “smoking gun” is the actual Bible that belonged to de Vere; its handwritten annotations closely match the biblical allusions in Shakespeare's works. The article was prompted by the fact that one Roger Stritmatter had recently earned the first Ph.D. in literature in the United States for a dissertation that used de Vere's Bible to argue that Shakespeare's works were written by de Vere. And this Bible is right here in Washington.

At our Lodge weekly staff conferences, there was a predictable pattern. If the therapist who was presenting seemed too confident that her work with a patient was going well, her colleagues would point out *all* the indications of immanent impasse in the treatment. On the other hand, if the therapist was visibly at the end her rope with discouragement, she could count on the rest of us to pick up on all the signs of *hope* that she was overlooking.

So, how is my Shakespeare research going? Terrible! You wouldn't believe what I have to put up with. Here's an actual email I got from the editor of a psychoanalytic journal after I submitted an article on Shakespeare. "I have to tell you, belief in de Vere as author of Shakespeare's works is like a belief in UFO's. I'm not going to publish your flight of fancy. It's hogwash. You're in the grip of a delusional belief." The editor was being so gentle with me because we know each other, and we were on friendly terms. When leading Shakespeare scholars are attacking authorship skeptics more generically, they are less restrained. We have recently been compared with the "birthers" who deny Obama is a U.S. citizen. Harvard's Stephen Greenblatt, speaking on NPR, compared us to Holocaust deniers.

It's hazardous to speculate about the psychology of one's interlocutors in the authorship debate. Traditionalists usually resort to *ad hominem* attacks, rather than address the complexity and scarcity of their evidence. I certainly don't want to emulate them in this regard. But I'm reminded of the old adage about assessing a patient's reaction to our interpretation. A simple no, or for that matter even a simple yes, in the absence of confirmatory associations, tells us our interpretation was probably incorrect, or perhaps incomplete. This is not the case, however, when an interpretation unleashes a furious backlash from the patient. This may be analogous to the response of most Shakespeare scholars to the Oxfordian hypothesis—this is the theory that Edward



John Updike

de Vere, Earl of Oxford wrote the canon. The intensity and vitriol of this reaction gives one pause, and raises questions as to the emotional causes of such an over-reaction.

Many years ago, I wrote to John Updike to tell him about an error in his just published novel. In it, he had called dry-roasted cashews "freeze-dried" by mistake. He promptly replied to my letter, "By Gad, you're probably right. Tell me, where do those 'freeze-dried' cashews occur, that I may change them in future editions [of the novel]?" After I told him, he wrote back,

I went over to the local supermarket trying to find a jar of them and couldn't; but I *couldn't* have just made them up, could I? Looking at page 96 I see that Harry [Angstrom, or "Rabbit"] contemplates them so deeply that to make them dry-roasted would be to throw my text into a turmoil.

When I had a chance to meet Updike nearly 20 years later, he said he still remembered my letter. He joked that I have made a contribution to American literature, since he *did* correct his error in subsequent printings.

By contrast, I had a very different experience when I tried to share a discovery not with a great *writer* of literature, but instead with a widely respected literary *scholar*. I heard that Columbia University's English professor James Shapiro was writing a new book on the question of Shakespeare's identity. So I offered to share with him my recent discoveries of previously unknown literary sources for Shakespeare in Edward de Vere's Bible. I'll be telling you more about these findings later in my talk. I thought these as yet unpublished discoveries would be relevant to the long-standing debate about who Shakespeare really was. But, unlike Updike, Professor Shapiro wrote back, "I don't correspond on this subject."

Shapiro's book was published two years ago to much critical acclaim, under the title, *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* I wrote to him again one year ago, to tell him that my review of his book would appear in the next issue of *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. This time, Shapiro replied,

You don't seem to understand my clear message: I will say it one last time and will in the future simply not respond to and will have to delete messages from you: I do not correspond about the authorship controversy. I can't be any clearer than that.

Apparently, Shapiro is not like Updike. I'm not sure that Shapiro really favors empirical investigation of unwelcome new evidence the way Updike did. Remember, Updike went to the supermarket to look for some freeze-dried cashews. Even after he failed to find any, he admitted he didn't want to think he had just made up something that's not true. But he *did* change them to dry-roasted cashews in subsequent printings of his novel. In all fairness, I admit Shapiro's dilemma is more complicated, since it involves more than correcting a brief bit of text. So I wonder if Shapiro ever consciously considers the possibility that he might be *wrong* about who Shakespeare was. Think of the massive cognitive dissonance he would then face. Rather than risk the private remorse and public humiliation this might lead to, in his book, in public lectures, and in interviews Shapiro has heaped ridicule on those of us who disagree with him.

Now I don't mean to imply that Updike typifies *all* creative writers, any more than Shapiro typifies *all* English professors. Our own Marshall Alcorn is a Profes-

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sor of English at George Washington University, and my friendship with Marshall has been a steady source of support and encouragement for the work that Shapiro is not interested in hearing about. I'm not saying that Marshall believes de Vere wrote Shakespeare. But his dissertation was on rhetoric, and Marshall once told me that defenders of the traditional author are reacting with what he calls "the rhetoric of ridicule," rather than with a serious engagement with new evidence and new ideas.

How do *we* react to people like Shapiro? It depends, of course, on many things. Most of us trust respected authorities in any field, until we have good reasons not to. My reaction is also influenced by my years at Chestnut Lodge. Fromm-Reichmann's charismatic and independent spirit lived on there, as it lives on in the work of many psychotherapists to this day. Like most educated people, Fromm-Reichmann knew the works of Shakespeare well. In her *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy*, she writes that studying dreams in works of creative literature can help us learn how to deal with them in therapy. She then gives dreams from four different plays of Shakespeare as illustrations of her point.

Despite Fromm-Reichmann's penchant for minimizing conflict concerning various professional debates, she has been identified with several controversies in the field of psychoanalysis. Frieda's rebellion against psychoanalytic orthodoxy resembles the attitude of intellectual freedom that has made some of us so-called Shakespeare authorship "heretics." The word heresy comes from the Greek verb meaning "to choose," in contrast with accepting current dogma.

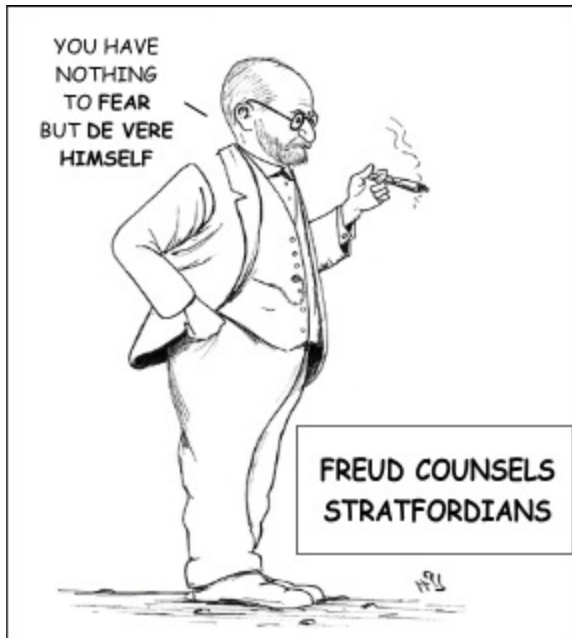
When people learn of my interest in the authorship question, they often ask me, "What difference does it make who wrote the plays? The plays themselves are the important thing." Each time I hear this, I secretly suspect that it matters more to that person than they're letting on. It has been said that ridicule is the first reaction to a new idea that turns out to be valid. The next step is "What difference does it make??" Finally, the third step is, "Oh, of course—I said that all along!"

Being the target of backlash goes with the territory of heterodoxy. Frieda knew that well. Defenders of orthodox but unproven theories resort to various strategies of distraction, to draw attention away from their embarrassing lack of definitive evidence. One time-honored strategy of the Stratfordians is to enforce a taboo of discussing the authorship question, since they assert that there is no doubt whatsoever about the matter, and there is no reason to waste time discussing it. After all, they believe they have already proven that conflicting evidence can't logically exist. For example, here's the email I got from an editor when he read the book review his publication had *asked* me to write—

I regret to advise you that we will not be publishing your review of *Shakespeare and His Authors*. [Our publication] does not publish reviews of works espousing the Oxfordian hypothesis. Nor do we publish pieces that argue that the Oxfordian hypothesis deserves more attention or more impartial evaluation or more credence, which, I think, fairly characterizes your own comments on [the book you reviewed].

We take this position because we are persuaded that the evidence (primarily the will, the monument [in Stratford], and the First Folio) demonstrates *conclusively* that William Shakespeare of Stratford wrote the works traditionally associated with his name. [Emphasis added.]

I can't resist clarifying that Shaksper's will that the editor referred to mentions no books or manuscripts, and was signed by someone who spelled "Shaksper" differently each time, with different handwriting. The monument in Stratford shows evidence of having been tampered with; it's unlikely the original version had the quill in Shakespeare's hand. And there is a strong case that The First Folio of 1623, the first publication of all of Shakespeare's plays, was sponsored by the two men to whom it was dedicated— Edward de Vere's son-in-law and that man's brother, who were under political pressure to publish these collected plays only on condition that they continue to disguise de Vere's authorship of them. And this is the supposed triad of irrefutable evidence that justifies that publication's taboo against printing anything by an Oxfordian.



Literature and Psycho-analysis

One reason I've become so interested in this controversy is that my psychoanalytic work, and my reading of creative literature, leave me in no doubt that knowing about the author enriches our appreciation for a great work of literature. This has somehow become controversial in literary criticism circles in recent decades, beginning with the so-called New Criticism, which tried to amputate the author from his/her work. A second reason it matters is that we're talking about the greatest writer in English

literature. I have loved Shakespeare's works since I was a boy, and I'd love to read more of what he wrote. I think I have, based on my revised understanding of just who he was.

Let me give some examples. Most of the published poems that were signed by Edward de Vere were published in the ten early editions of *Paradise of Daintie Devises*. The ostensible editor of this volume died when de Vere was 16, so this may constitute de Vere's juvenilia. *Paradise of Daintie Devises* was an extremely popular Elizabethan collection of song lyrics. And de Vere loved music, by the

way. William Byrd, the famous Elizabethan composer, said de Vere's musical skills were on a professional level. Every Shakespeare play either contains music

Earlier in his life, de Vere was known as the best author of comedies and court masques. It was also known that he preferred to write anonymously. I believe he wrote a petition to the Queen for financial support in 1586, around the time scholars believe the *Arte* was first written. I think de Vere sought the Queen's financial support to subsidize the writing of his history plays.

or refers to music. Anyway, I found two anonymous poems in some editions of *Paradise* that immediately followed poems signed by de Vere. These two poems allude to controversial episodes in his life. I believe this explains why they were published anonymously. Those not part of the inner court circle would not be able to read between the lines and detect his brazen defiance of the Queen in

both of these poems. Attributing them to de Vere was facilitated by their many connections with phrases in Shakespeare's works, and with phrases in some of Shakespeare's primary literary sources.

Another example. One of the most important Elizabethan books on poetry, rhetoric, and proper courtly conduct is the anonymous 1589 *Arte of English Poetrie*. It has been *misattributed* to George Puttenham, on flimsy grounds. Someone once quipped that literary scholars abhor an authorship vacuum, so once an attribution wins a critical mass of support, it's not easy to overturn it. Much of this 1589 book is addressed to the Queen in the second person, including an audacious reference to the Queen's nipples. Significantly, the book reminds the Queen that previous monarchs, including her father, King Henry VIII, rewarded their favorite poets financially. Three years before the book was published, the Queen awarded de Vere a pension of £1,000 per year, which King James later continued. Queen Elizabeth stipulated that no one should ask about the reasons for this annuity.

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Sir Francis Walsingham directed the Queen's intelligence agency. He used covert propaganda to influence public opinion, during an era when civil war and Spanish and papal attempts to overthrow Elizabeth were an ongoing and grave danger. And pro-Elizabeth plays ostensibly written by a *commoner* were more likely to win widespread public support for her than would plays known to be written by a court *insider*, who was described as one of the Queen's favorites when he was in his early 20's. Some 50 years earlier, by the way, Thomas Crom-

well commissioned plays to be performed throughout England, with the aim of building support for Henry VIII's campaign against the Pope.

So these two poems and one book are examples of the pleasure of getting to read other works I believe were written by the same person who wrote the works of Shakespeare. As an added bonus, de Vere's authorship of *The Arte of English Poesie* strengthens the theory that de Vere was the pseudonymous commentator "E.K." in Edmund Spenser's 1579 long poem *The Shepheard's Calendar*.

Another question I'm always asked is "Why did Edward de Vere choose to write anonymously?" The shortest answer is "Why not?" That may sound glib, but it's not really. In a scholarly book called *The Faces of Anonymity*, Robert J. Griffin observes that most books published in English *before* the 20th century were published without the author's real name. He goes on,

The motivations for publishing anonymously have varied widely with circumstances, but they have included an *aristocratic... reticence*, religious self-effacement, anxiety over public exposure, fear of prosecution, hope of an unprejudiced reception, and the desire to deceive. [Emphasis added.]

Each of those factors may have played some role in de Vere's motivation.

Pseudonymity

Perhaps we could take a moment here to remind ourselves of the many and varied examples of books not signed with their author's legal name. Did you realize that all of the following names of authors are actually pen names? Moliere, Voltaire, Stendhal, Mark Twain, John Le Carré, George Eliot, Lewis Carroll, George Orwell, Toni Morrison, and Woody Allen. During the McCarthy era, blacklisted Hollywood screenwriters used front men as the ostensible writers of their scripts, in order to get around the ban on writing under their own names. There is also the related category of literary forgeries. The so-called Donation of Constantine was one of the most successful and long-lasting. It was an 8th-century forgery by the Vatican, ostensibly a document signed by Emperor Constantine 400 years earlier, giving primacy to the Pope over the Roman Empire's secular rulers. It took this forgery some *700 years* to be exposed. Then there is Thomas Rowley, the 15th century poet whose poems were actually written by the adolescent Thomas Chatterton, who suicided at 17 when his hoax was exposed.

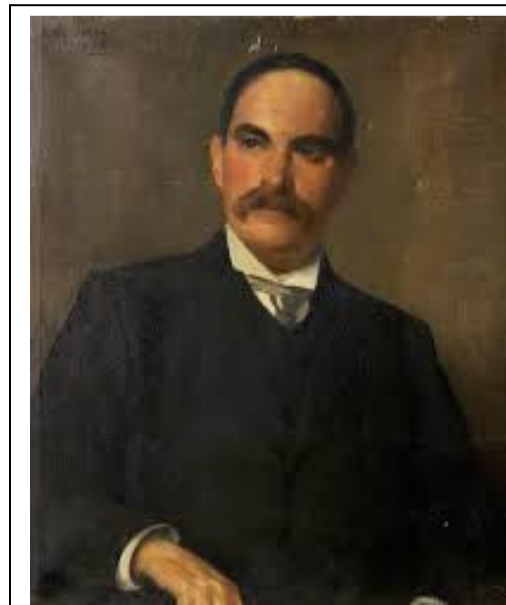
Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* was a sort of Miss Manners for the Renaissance nobility. De Vere sponsored a Latin translation of it, and he took the book to heart. One central ideal for courtly behavior was *sprezzatura*, which can be translated as a façade of insouciance, or nonchalance. Elizabethan nobility rarely published their poems under their own names during their lifetimes. Doing so would have conflicted with their need to avoid any appearance of working, or of wanting public recognition for their poetry. They might act in or even write court masques and interludes, and sponsor theatrical troupes for their

own entertainment (and de Vere did all of the above), but they had nothing to do with *public* theaters. Openly, at least.

Having addressed the question of why de Vere might have concealed his authorship, let me now raise a different question—how do we feel about having been *deceived* by him for the past 400 years? I believe this question is relevant to the intensity of the authorship debate. It is said that the New Yorker’s worst fear is to be a sucker. But not just New Yorkers. As someone who may be unusually gullible, I know just how embarrassing it can be. Like when my 14-year-old daughter told me, “Guess what, Dad! They’ve taken the word ‘gullible’ out of the dictionary!” To my lasting shame, my response was “Really?!” Anyway, I am proposing that one reason people insist “Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare” is that they don’t want to feel the way I felt when my daughter burst into laughter. Especially if they are a famous Shakespeare expert. When they say, “There’s no doubt whatsoever that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare,” what they are implicitly saying is “There is no possible way I could be wrong about this and look like a total idiot.”

Wretched Infidel Stuff!

The 150-year history of insults used by Stratfordians naturally reflects the various bugaboos of their respective eras. In the 19th century, the great Shakespeare scholar Sidney Lee began the ongoing tradition of *ad hominem* attacks on what he called authorship “heretics.” His religious language is unmistakable, despite the ubiquitous negations among Shakespeare scholars when they disavow their own “bardolatry.” Ironically, it is difficult to miss the “heretical” elements in the works of Shakespeare. Theater has always been deeply subversive in its critiques of convention and of those in power. Shakespeare’s poetry also subverts accepted social norms. A 17th-century reader of the first edition of Shakespeare’s 1609 Sonnets wrote at the end of his copy, “What a heap of wretched *Infidel* stuff!” [Emphasis added.]



Sir Sidney Lee 1859-1926

Sidney Lee’s 1898 discussion of the authorship controversy begins by referring to the “fantastic theory” that Shakespeare’s works were not written by Shakespeare. He calls such a theory “perverse.” Lee was one of the first Shakespeare

scholars to argue that we should dissociate the author's life experiences from his literary works. Given the complete lack of fit between the traditional author's life and the works of Shakespeare, Lee suggested we should not *expect* to find any such correspondence—"it is dangerous to read into Shakespeare's dramatic utterances allusions to his personal experience"... "to assume that he wrote...from practical experience... is to underrate his intuitive power of realising life under almost every aspect *by force of his imagination.*" Lee invokes a dangerously misleading false dichotomy between imaginative genius and life experiences in order to buttress the traditional authorship theory.

That Was the Question

The Shakespeare authorship question first came to widespread attention in the 1850's. Most Elizabethan plays were published anonymously, and there was little interest in *who* wrote the plays of Shakespeare until 1769, when the great actor David Garrick organized a Stratford Jubilee to honor the supposed author of these works. Perhaps because of the atheism of the late Enlightenment, the bard now filled a void previously occupied by God, and bardolatry began in earnest. Only then did people try to find some evidence linking the traditional author to his works. Finally, a treasure trove of relevant letters and manuscripts was discovered by the young William Ireland. But he later admitted he forged it all. Then John Collier, a serious scholar, made his own discoveries. But in the 1830's, he admitted he too had forged all his supposed discoveries.

I believe this stubborn lack of evidence had everything to do with the eventual rise of skepticism about the author's true identity. In 1857, the American Delia Bacon published a book arguing that Shakespeare's works were written by Sir Francis Bacon. It was another 63 years before Edward de Vere was first proposed as the author. We still suffer from the backlash against the Baconians. Supporters of the traditional theory had those 63 years to become confident that they were right, and that supporters of Bacon—and the many other proposed authors—were all wrong. Further, the large number of proposed authors led traditionalists to argue with pseudologic that they couldn't *all* have been the author, ergo *none* of them was.

Stratfordians enjoy publicizing Delia Bacon's death in a psychiatric hospital. A very different nervous breakdown is less well known, although it is memorialized in a short story by no less a writer than Henry James. An English coal miner named Joseph Skipsey became fond of Shakespeare; published poetry; and was then hired to give tours of the Shakespeare birthplace in Stratford. But the skepticism of many tourists as to the authorship of Shakespeare "was all too much for poor Skipsey, who had a breakdown, left the job and ended up back at the mine." "Skipsey's psychological experiences at Stratford suggested the theme of Henry James's short story 'The Birthplace'." James learned about Skipsey when he read his obituary, and James published "The Birthplace" only months later, in 1903. James was openly skeptical about the traditional authorship theory; he eloquently

puzzled over what he called the unbearable thought that the world's greatest author supposedly retired from writing for the last several years of his life.

In the early 20th century, Oxfordians were accused of being religious agnostics (although the term "heretics" survives into the present). After the notorious communist witch hunt of Senator Joseph McCarthy, it was said that we were similarly alleging a great, hidden conspiracy. A reviewer for one journal wrote of my submitted paper on Shakespeare,

The author is enlisting Freud in the cause of promoting the de Vere myth. He urges us to be "open-minded" on the subject. This is like being open-minded about the idea that the World Trade Towers were attacked by the U.S. government.

Ironically (but not surprisingly), a close examination of the usual dismissals of de Vere often reveals evidence of projection. Let me give some examples. It is said that we Oxfordians do not know how to interpret literary evidence. In reality, I find that it is the Stratfordians who have always conflated contemporary references to the pen-name Shakespeare with references to the front-man from Stratford. Their case rests almost entirely on the 1623 First Folio of Shakespeare's collected plays. But in accepting the attributed authorship of this volume, they ignore growing documentation of the ubiquity of anonymous and pseudonymous authorship of 16th century plays (e.g., North, 2002; Griffin, 2003; Mullan, 2007).

Further, they conceal some of the most significant evidence concerning de Vere's writing career. They rarely inform their readers that de Vere sponsored theatrical troupes most of his adult life; that he wrote poetry in English and Latin since early adolescence; that he was acknowledged by his contemporaries as the best courtier poet of the early Elizabethan era; that he was known to be a playwright, and was recognized as the best author of comedies in his day; that he hired as his literary secretaries some leading Elizabethan authors, such as Anthony Munday and John Lyly; that documented details of his life story are echoed again and again in Shakespeare's plays; that the story of Shakespeare's Sonnets matches important features of his life circumstances; and that he was known by some contemporaries to have written anonymously. Instead, Stratfordians usually just tell us he was upper class and well educated, and that those are the *only* reasons that some of us falsely believe he wrote Shakespeare's works. As you see, they

Stratfordians continue to follow the sort of Aristotelian deductive reasoning that begins with an unquestioned premise. They do not put into practice the newer Renaissance methodology of inductive reasoning based on an objective assessment of all the evidence. None of us is immune to blind spots for the powerful way our assumptions skew our perceptions of evidence.

have filtered out the relevant evidence, assuming you will trust them to tell you what you need to know to decide for yourself.

Genuine openness to the evidence requires a willingness to question one's assumptions. Orthodox Shakespeareans, however, unwittingly demonstrate a fixation in a medieval form of reasoning from the unquestionable premise of accepting the traditional author. Consequently, they continue to follow the sort of Aristotelian *deductive* reasoning that begins with an unquestioned premise. They do not put into practice the newer Renaissance methodology of *inductive* reasoning based on an objective assessment of all the evidence. None of us is immune to blind spots for the powerful way our assumptions skew our perceptions of evidence.

Since the Enlightenment, we typically turn to the scientific method as the gold standard for an objective assessment of the evidence in any field. Ironically, scientists, being human, often fall short of this ideal of objectivity themselves. The history of virtually any topic in science shows a disturbing pattern of scientists ignoring, explaining away, or suppressing new evidence that contradicts a prevailing theory, to which they are excessively attached. As a result of the groupthink of scientists, it is sometimes an outsider who is able to discover a new paradigm that is later validated. It was a *non-geologist* who discovered continental drift, 50 years before professional geologists stopped ridiculing him and realized he was correct.

As Tom Siegfried, the editor of *Science News*, wrote:

Scientists sometimes cringe at revelations of their fallibility. But it's how science works, and how it works best. Science's great strength is the willingness to submit [observations to further] scrutiny. Nonscientists in any number of other fields might want to ponder whether the world would be better off if they had the same attitude" (181[4]: 2, February 25, 2012).

Let me now move on to another example of projection in the defense of the traditional author. In the absence of any relevant evidence, we supporters of de Vere are often accused of being snobs and elitists. Ironically, many defenders of Stratford betray something very much like elitism when they imply that only specialists with the right academic credentials know how to interpret the evidence correctly. One Stratfordian scholar, in arguing that the play *Edward III* was written entirely by Shakespeare, criticizes the covert assumptions of his fellow Shakespeare specialists who reject any work from the Shakespeare canon if it does not meet their belief as to Shakespeare's writing at its best. He claims that the theory of joint authorship of plays such as *Edward III* was invented without any relevant evidence, in order to explain lines of verse in the play that did not meet scholars' expectations as to the quality of Shakespeare's writing. He adds that their conjectures "are just literary inventions emanating from the *elitist* attitudes of 1920s Oxbridge that still dominate orthodox scholarship world-wide."

One of the traditionalists' biggest guns is their claim that the chronology of the composition of the plays unequivocally disproves de Vere's authorship. *But* their chronology rests on a crumbling foundational assumption, based on circular reasoning, starting with the 1564-1616 dates of their alleged author. They always cited *The Tempest* as their ace card, assuming it was written after a certain 1609 shipwreck. That theory was recently thoroughly discredited. So now they are turning to *Macbeth*, and the unproven assumption that a major theme in it is an allusion to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the year after de Vere's death. However, the few such lines in the play that might allude to the Gunpowder Plot are known to have been added later. It has recently been shown that all the words in *Macbeth* that allegedly prove it was written after 1604 occur in a 1603 book by Thomas Bell; see Richard M. Waugaman, "A 1603 Source for 'Equivocation' as an Alleged Gunpowder Plot Allusion in *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* 42(2): 9-10, 2013.

The chronology of the plays actually fits much more closely with de Vere's life than with Shakespeare's. The traditional theory fails to explain why he retired to Stratford and stopped his literary activities during the last several years of his life. Henry James, for example, said he could not bear having no plausible reason for this retirement. Although no one knows just when any single play was *written*, there is a relevant fact about dates of *publication* that the traditionalists never mention. There were 22 so-called "Quarto" editions of single Shakespeare plays published before the collected plays of 1623. Seventeen of these were published during the last 11 years of de Vere's life. What about the next 11 years, between de Vere's death in 1604 and the death of the Stratford man in 1616? This is always assumed to be a very productive period in Shakespeare's writing. Then why were only four Quartos of plays published during those 11 years? Four, compared with 17 in the previous 11 year period, while de Vere was alive—a 75% decrease. Further, many Shakespeare plays were based on earlier, anonymous plays that might have been written by de Vere himself, such as the lost "Ur-Hamlet."

Biographical Blueprints

Our minds hunger for narratives. The traditional authorship theory offers an appealing narrative of a person of humble origins who, through native genius and a modest education, rose to the greatest heights of literary accomplishment. This narrative has been powerful enough to create blind spots in its adherents for the many facts that are inconsistent with the legendary author. We are at risk for underestimating the role of our own psychology in which narrative we choose. As Freud pointed out, we know so little about the traditional author that we can assume he was as great a person as are the writings we attribute to him.

The psychoanalyst George Moraitis, in his extensive research on the psychology of the biographer, has concluded that biographers unconsciously construct a narrative "blueprint" *before* doing their research, and they then write a biography through a selective use of data about their subject, so that it fits with their uncon-

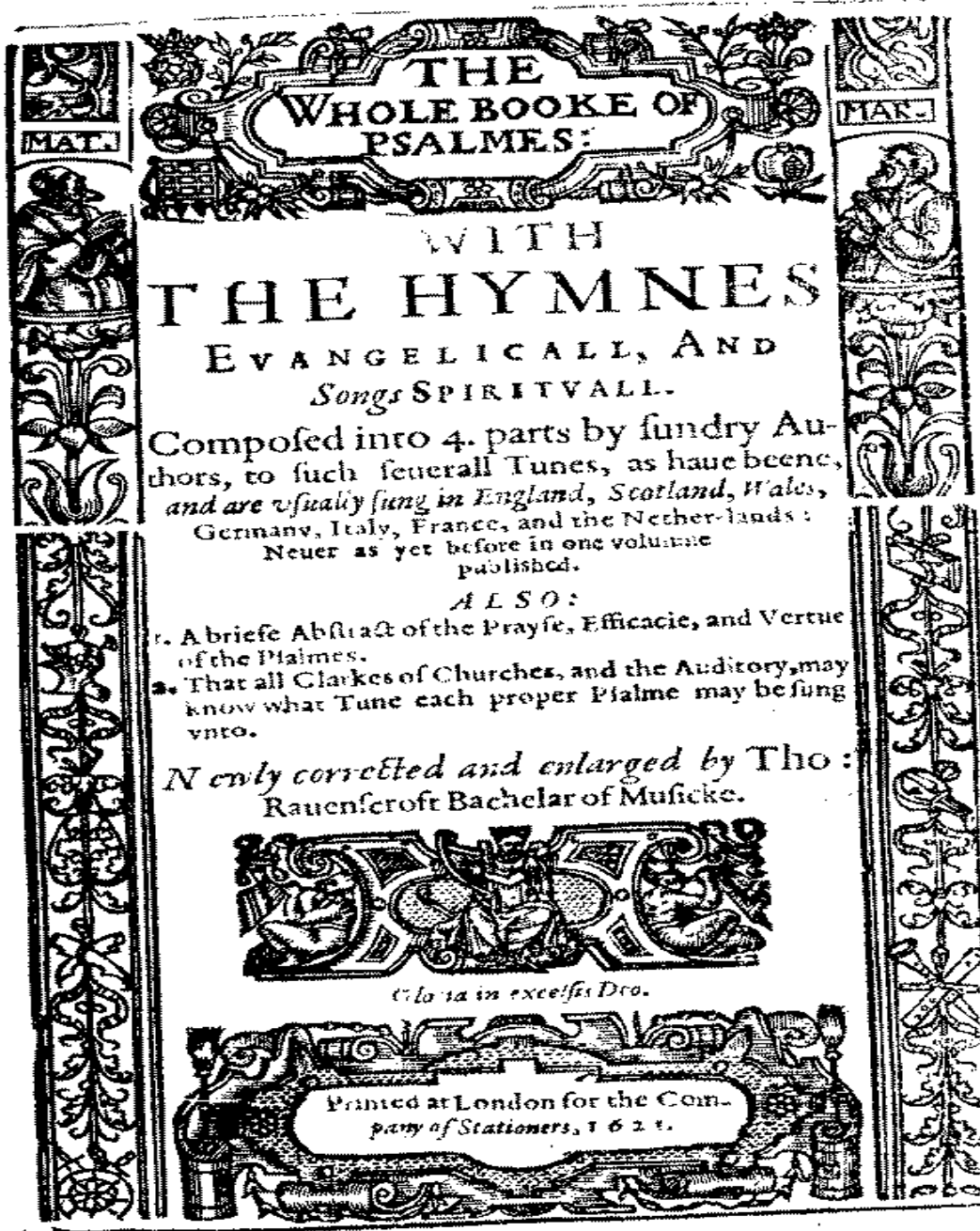
scious blueprint. I would suggest that this is precisely what has gotten the exploration of Shakespeare's identity so far off track. Since the actual author was born into one of the most noble families in England and then suffered from severe *downward* mobility the rest of his life, he lends himself much more poorly to the legend of ascent from humble beginnings that Ernst Kris recurrently found in biographies of great artists.

Deliberately or not, de Vere chose a front man who has proven much better suited to such a legend of the artist of humble origins. Although there is no indication that the man from Stratford was famous during his lifetime, his economic position rose from modest beginnings to relatively great wealth, and his reputation skyrocketed, beginning 150 years *after* his death. For centuries it was assumed that Shakespeare's rudimentary education proved that his genius represented the divine workings of Nature, in the absence of much educational Nurture. It was only ever so slowly that Shakespeare scholars have acknowledged the stupendous scope of Shakespeare's learning, and the profound way his plays grapple with most of the thorniest intellectual problems of his day.

There are 450 Biblical verses that Shakespeare cited only once; only 13 percent of these verses are marked in de Vere's Bible. But among the 160 verses Shakespeare cited four times, de Vere marked 27 percent of these. There are even eight verses that Shakespeare cited six times—de Vere marked 88 percent of these. These connections form a straight line that points to de Vere's authorship of the works of Shakespeare.

The 2002 *New York Times* article I told you about at the beginning got me so enthused that I applied for privileges to use the Folger's collection, just so I could see Edward de Vere's Bible for myself. Before long, I met Roger Stritmatter, who wrote his dissertation on that Bible. We co-authored an article updating Freud's opinions about Shakespeare's identity. So I have been fortunate to have a leading de Vere scholar as my friend and collaborator.

I began spending many Saturdays at the Folger, reading widely in their rare editions of Elizabethan books. I was warmly welcomed by their staff, despite my authorship heresy. I got to know many scholars from around the world, who come to the Folger to do research. I attended all of the lectures and conferences there that I could. Let me return now to Edward de Vere's Bible for a bit. Re-analyzing Roger Stritmatter's extensive data, I helped show that de Vere and "Shakespeare" had comparable levels of interest in a given biblical verse.



The Whole Book of Psalms, reproduced from microfiche. Dated 1624, de Vere would have used an earlier version.

I'll explain what I mean. There are 450 Biblical verses that Shakespeare cited only once; only 13 percent of these verses are marked in de Vere's Bible. But among the 160 verses Shakespeare cited *four* times, de Vere marked 27 percent of these. There are even eight verses that Shakespeare cited *six* times—de Vere marked 88 percent of these. These connections form a straight line that points to de Vere's authorship of the works of Shakespeare.

De Vere and the Psalms

Four years ago, I was looking at the Psalms set to music that are bound at the end of de Vere's Bible. This constituted the standard Elizabethan hymnal, after the Queen ordered congregations to start singing hymns in 1559. So de Vere's contemporaries were deeply familiar with the wording of this particular Psalm translation. It led me to the most important recently discovered literary source for the works of Shakespeare. I had seen years earlier that de Vere drew highly unusual, large, pointing hands in the margin next to 14 psalms, and that he marked 7 other psalms in various ways. One day, I noticed a parallel between a phrase in one of the psalms de Vere had marked, and some words in a Shakespearean Sonnet. Psalm 12:4

Our tongues are ours, we ought to speak.
What Lord shall us control?

sounds almost like Cordelia, while Sonnet 66 includes the line "And art made tongue-tied by authority." The

The Whole Book of Psalms may have had a wider and more significant influence on de Vere than any other book of the Bible, and it was certainly more influential on his work than any other translation of the Psalms. De Vere clearly loved the poetry of psalms.

latter is thus the antithesis of the former. The more I looked, the more such echoes, parallels, and antitheses of annotated psalms I found in Shakespeare's works.

We already knew that Shakespeare frequently echoes

the Psalms. But let me tell you a little more about the version of the Psalms in which I have found all this. A now obscure translation of the Psalms was phenomenally popular in de Vere's day, and for the next century. This was the translation begun by Thomas Sternhold under Henry VIII, and later completed by John Hopkins and others. It was published as *The Whole Book of Psalms*. As I said, a copy of it is bound at the end of de Vere's Geneva Bible.

I wrote to my friend and co-author Roger Stritmatter about it. He replied that no one had noticed that connection, and encouraged me to keep on looking. When we don't have expert knowledge of the scholarship in some field, it is invaluable to have specialists to whom we can turn.

Starting in the 18th century, the literary quality of *The Whole Book of Psalms* came in for some hard knocks. Its awkward wording was roundly ridiculed. In C.S. Lewis's mostly authoritative summary of 16th century literature, he denounces its poor literary quality, but adds that it did no damage, since it had no influence on literature. C.S. Lewis was wrong. In fact, I am discovering that WBP may have had a wider and more significant influence on de Vere than any other book of the Bible, and it was certainly more influential on his work than any other translation of the Psalms. De Vere clearly loved the poetry of WBP. It grew deep roots into his psyche. His mind had an extraordinary associative facility, and his verbal associations often turned to the wording of WBP. It was my assumption that de Vere wrote Shakespeare's works that permitted me to make this discovery.

Let me give a few examples of what I've found. *Edward III*, that supposedly apocryphal play I mentioned earlier, has extensive allusions to Psalm 103, which de Vere marked with a pointing hand. My article on that discovery therefore supports attributing *Edward III* to "Shakespeare." Lady Macbeth's famous "Out damned spot" speech has some crucial echoes of Psalm 51, the so-called "chief penitential psalm," that embodied Christian theology as to the true state of contrition necessary for divine forgiveness. But Lady Macbeth's echoes of Psalm 51 ironically underscore just how far she falls short of true penance. Many of the first 126 Sonnets, addressed to the Fair Youth, engage in implicit dialogues with specific psalms. They often place the Youth in the role of God, with de Vere as a latter-day King David, composing blasphemous hymns of praise to his beloved.

Intertextuality

Shakespeare scholars consistently say there is absolutely no evidence linking de Vere to the works of Shakespeare. My seven articles documenting this translation's profound intertextuality with Shakespeare's works are based primarily, though not exclusively, on the 21 psalms in which de Vere showed special interest by annotating them in some way. So I hope my discoveries in de Vere's Bible will be considered relevant to the authorship question.

For two years, I enjoyed a friendly email correspondence with a leading expert on Elizabethan poetry. I then thanked him for being so unusually tolerant of us Oxfordians. He replied "The problem with your theory is that you don't have a single electron of evidence that de Vere wrote the works of Shakespeare." This made me mad, I admit, but I tried to get even, by submitting a paper to a conference we both attended. To my surprise, the paper was accepted, with the title, "An Oxfordian Quark, or a Quirky Oxfreudian? Psalm Evidence that Edward de Vere Wrote the Works of Shakespeare."

But my friend had the last laugh, since my paper was left out of the published collection of the presentations at that conference. That pretty much captures the ups and downs of being an Oxfreudian.