



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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Continued Support Pledged at 18th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference

by Howard Schumann

Concordia University's 18th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference was held from April 10 to 13 in Portland, Oregon. Attendees were welcomed by David Kluth, Dean of the College of Theology, Arts, & Sciences, who expressed his gratitude to Dr. Earl Showerman for assuming the chairmanship of the Conference. Dean Kluth read a letter from the former Conference Chairman Dr. Daniel Wright, who expressed his support for the continuing work of the Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre.

Dr. Kluth stated that he is committed to the authorship question and will continue to support Shakespeare studies. He plans to select a new director of the SARC by the end of the summer. The conference, summer seminar and SARC associate scholars program will proceed as in the past and new initiatives, including outreach to secondary schools and online education regarding the Shakespeare Authorship question, are being considered.

Keir Cutler, an actor and writer with a PhD in Theater, received the annual *Vero Nihil Verius* Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Shakespearean Arts. Based on the satire of Mark Twain, who questioned the traditional Stratfordian attribution, Cutler's one-man show "Is Shakespeare Dead?" has been entertaining audiences at universities and theater festivals throughout North America for several years and has even spawned a German version (see separate article in this issue). Cutler performed "Is Shakespeare Dead?" at the conference, at Portland Lutheran High School and Terwilliger Plaza, with a great reception at each venue.

The *Vero Nihil Verius* award for Distinguished Shakespearean Scholarship was given to John Rollett for his original research into the Sonnets dedication and other aspects of the authorship question, and to Peter Sturrock, emeritus professor of Applied Physics and author of the book *AKA Shakespeare: A Scientific Approach to the Authorship Question* (neither was able to attend).
(Continued on p. 24)



ANNOUNCING:

New Research Grant Program

(See Page 2)

Clockwise from top left: Amoret Heise and Sam Saunders; Don Rubin; Kathleen Wilson, Cheryl Eagan-Donovan and Earl Showerman; Bonner Miller Cutting; Roger Stritmatter and James Warren; Michael Delahoyde and Sam Saunders; Dean David Kluth.

From the President's Office:

New Research Grant Program Established

One of our primary objectives as an Oxfordian organization is furthering research that will ultimately provide clear evidence that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the author of the works published under the pseudonym "William Shakespeare." That is our ultimate goal. Each new piece of evidence is valuable to the resolution of the authorship issue.

We are pleased, therefore, to announce a new Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grant Program and are soliciting applications for awards. Previously, funds were not available for independent researchers to do this kind of exploration. But that has changed, thanks, in part, to the costs saved in the unification of our two Oxfordian societies.

We need to promote more research on anyone who was associated or corresponded with Oxford, such as John Lyly, Antony Munday and Sturmius of Germany. Oxford also employed several stewards during his lifetime: Their surviving documents and letters may be sitting in archives that could contain something of importance about Oxford if only someone would look for it. The same is true for the need to research private libraries in England and the archives of Italian cities such as Venice, Verona, Padua, Milan and Mantua, where Oxford lived or visited. A whole new world of new Shakespeare research is just waiting to be discovered, and you could be part of it!

Please review the details of the Research Grant Program on the facing page. If you are interested, and qualify to apply, then please contact John Hamill at hamillx@pacbell.net.

As it stands now, the program will begin with \$20,000 per year in award funds, half from our endowment and half from members and friends. The grants will be given to members, so please join if you have not already. We have also initiated a Lead Donors Program for those who donate \$1,000 or more for this purpose. So far, we are pleased to announce that Ben August, Bonner and Jack Cutting, Richard Joyrich are Lead Donors. Please consider joining us so that we can ensure the continuity and success of the Research Grant Program.

You can help fund the Research Grant Program (or you can join or renew membership) by sending a check to Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466, or you can pay by credit card on our website: www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/store/products/membership/ (please indicate on your check if your contribution is earmarked for the Research Grant Program).

Even if you don't apply for a research grant, you can promote further research by becoming a member or donating. We hope that members, friends and foundations will be motivated by this new program. Your financial contribution will help make it succeed.

Hope to hear from you!
John Hamill

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to investigating the Shakespeare authorship question and disseminating the evidence that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), is the true author of the poems and plays written under the pseudonym "William Shakespeare."

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship pursues its mission by supporting research, educational and scholarly initiatives, annual conferences, website and social media, and by publishing this Newsletter and two annual scholarly journals, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*.

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship was formed in 2013 when the Shakespeare Oxford Society, founded in 1957, and the Shakespeare Fellowship, founded in 2001, united to form a single organization. Dues, grants and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

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Articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items of interest to the Shakespeare Oxfordian community are welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. As provided in the bylaws, "The conferences, publications, and other educational projects of the Fellowship will be open forums for all aspects of the Oxfordian theory of authorship."

Alex McNeil, newsletter editor: (newsletter@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org)

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Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grant Program

Summary of Major Points

- The initial plan is to award \$20,000 in grants depending on the amount of money raised.
- Funds will be raised from membership and friends and matched by SOF endowment.
- Approximately two to four grants envisioned, amounts depending on project proposals submitted.
- Grant recipients must be (or become) members of SOF to receive funds.
- Financial need will be taken into account if noted on the application.
- New unpublished applicants will be preferred to encourage new researchers.
- In addition to basic purpose (see Rules 2 and 3 below), applicants and the SOF Board can suggest topics or activities that they are interested in.
- Proposals will be accepted through August 30, 2014, with the Selection Committee's decision announced by November 30, 2014.
- Members of the Selection Committee for this first round are: Katherine Chiljan, Bonner Cutting, Ramon Jiménez, John Hamill and Don Rubin.

Grant Program Rules

1. The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship intends to make two to four cash grants to scholars and researchers for the purpose of developing new knowledge bearing on the Shakespeare Authorship Question.
2. Grants will be made for proposals that have the potential for uncovering new information about the individuals and circumstances surrounding the composition and publication of the Shakespeare canon.
3. A successful grant application will propose one or more of the following:
 - a. Examination of a neglected or previously unknown archive, library or document that might lead to a discovery of importance.
 - b. Research that will identify a previously unknown person or place mentioned in the Shakespeare canon.
 - c. Research that will identify the author of a literary work, or the creator of a particular image, that has an important bearing on the Shakespeare Authorship Question.
 - d. Specific research projects that the SOF suggests are the following:
 - i. Research in private libraries in the United Kingdom.
 - ii. Research in the archives of northern Italian cities.
 - iii. Research on anyone who was associated or corresponded with Oxford such as Lyly, Munday or Sturmius.
 - e. Any other research that has the potential to add important new facts bearing on the Shakespeare Authorship Question.
4. Grants will not be made to finance a student's degree program unless they meet one or more of the above criteria.
5. Grant funds may be used for travel, materials, fees and, where appropriate, living expenses.
6. Each applicant must describe the process and methods of his or her research project and explain how it meets one or more of the criteria listed above.
7. Each applicant must specify the amounts requested for travel, materials, fees, and living expenses, where appropriate, and why they are necessary.
8. Each applicant must be a member in good standing of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship in order to receive funds.
9. Proposals will be judged by a selection committee appointed by the SOF President, made up of individuals who are familiar with the field of Shakespeare Authorship studies
10. Grants will be financed by a combination of specific donations to the Program and a matching amount from the Fellowship's funds, to a combined maximum of \$20,000.
11. The grant proposal period will run for three months, after which the Society will announce the successful applicants. The donation period will run indefinitely.
12. Depending on the amount raised and matched, the Fellowship will make one or more grants of \$3,000 to \$20,000.
13. Grantees will be expected to complete their research within six months and submit a written report to the SOF Board of Trustees within the following three months.
14. Grantees will be encouraged to submit papers describing their research to mainstream journals. If this is unsuccessful, the Fellowship will consider such papers for one of its publications.
15. Applications should be submitted to John Hamill at hamillx@pacbell.net.

Instructions for submission:

1. Submit by email to John Hamill at hamillx@pacbell.net.
2. 12-point type, double-spaced, four-page maximum narrative.
3. Grant funds are limited; the SOF prefers to give the grant to a person who would not be able to do the project as well, or at all, without it. The SOF grant may only partially fund your project; in that case will you be able to find the other funds needed or reduce the scale of the project? SOF grants will range from \$3,000 to \$20,000.

Contents of four-page narrative :

1. A two-sentence summary of the project (for announcement purposes).
2. Detailed line-item budget of the grant request.
3. Need or opportunity for the research—with your hypothesis.
4. Research plan (what will be done, where, other relevant info, timeline).
5. Background of person doing research—education, membership in SOF, ability to do research, etc.
6. Why you need the grant. If the SOF can only fund a portion of your request, how will that affect your project?

Criteria (50 points total)

- 35 points—research hypothesis and plan
- 7 points—background of applicant
- 4 points—need
- 4 points—new researcher

Letters to the Editor

Hamlet Made Simple and Other Essays (and its forthcoming sequel) are exercises in literary criticism composed from an Oxfordian perspective. They are not devoted principally to the authorship issue. What is attempted, rather, is a close study of Shakespeare, and, where appropriate, rebuttal of prominent interpretations resting on either ideology or substantial departures from the text. The method employed throughout is one of argument, featuring aspects of the historical record. Book reviewers who approach such projects are at a disadvantage insofar as limitations of space tend to preclude engagement with extensive and meticulous disputation. It is typically only in full length journal articles that such treatises can be fairly explicated and evaluated. Where actual reasoning is neglected, reviews tend to be a parade of subjective opinions and attitudes.

We are all grateful to Richard Waugaman for working through *Hamlet Made Simple* and reporting his findings [editor's note: Richard Waugaman's review appeared in the Winter 2014 issue]. Those who choose to go forward and tackle the book will come to an understanding and appreciation of what it accomplishes. For example, Martin Lings, a Sufi mystic, in *Shakespeare's Window on the Soul*, treats Prince Hal as a saint and Falstaff as a devil. That *a priori* dualism is shown in *Hamlet Made Simple* to be inconsistent with the actual content of *Henry IV*. The poverty of Lings' position is demonstrated line by line, and is not a function of any animus against Islam. Similarly, the claim of feminist writers such as Catherine Belsey that Shakespeare's female characters are uniformly powerless and silent is painstakingly refuted on the basis of many plays. Considering the forensic necessities, it seems unhelpful to refer to such exacting criticism as "diatribe." Psychoanalytic concepts are applied in certain cases to shed light on such figures as Lear and Prospero, but it is contended that the antiquated Oedipal trope is inapplicable to Prince Hamlet, whose malaise is better understood as reaction to his doubtful identity and exclusion from the Danish throne. It is demonstrated that Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones completely misunderstand the Oedipus narrative; a far richer account of Greek myth is offered (pp. 398-399). Remarkably, this promising rehabilitation of Greek myth in general and Oedipus in particular has yet to be noticed by anyone, including those in the psychoanalytic community.

We are now witnessing a sea change in the popular conception of Shakespeare. Unless someone can inject new life into the remains of Shagsper, the Oxfordian revolution may be at hand. (See, *e.g.*, "William Shakespeare, Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and the 's till-Vexed Bermoothes,'" by Keith Hopkins, *New English Review*, February 2014) That revolution will be hastened and supported as Oxfordians

turn their attention from the authorship question *per se* to a demonstration of the enhanced comprehension of the plays and poems the new vantage point affords. The paradigm shift from Stratford to Oxford carries implications and consequences yet to be reckoned with. What is called for is nothing less than a wholly revised acceptance of Shakespeare in our time.

David Gontar

Thanks to William Ray for his thorough, thoughtful review of *A Poet's Rage* in the last issue. It is much appreciated. However, I'd like to comment on and clarify a couple of things.

First, Ray's reference to my introductory statement in Appendix A, "The Prince Tudor Theory" ("Some of the text has drawn upon the Wikipedia entry for 'Prince Tudor,' since much basic history is recorded there"), suggests that Appendix A is therefore less than it could have been because of using Wikipedia at all. As Ray correctly notes, the "current group that has commandeered the [Wikipedia] Shakespeare pages usually commits a hatchet job on anything Oxfordian." I wrote about the Wikipedia mess in *Shakespeare Matters* ("Wikipedia Wars," Summer 2011), so I know how untrustworthy it is on all things concerning authorship.

I used the Wikipedia entry as a starting point for Appendix A because it was the only place I knew of where anyone had attempted to write a "history" of the theory. But in the end virtually everything from Wikipedia was deleted and replaced with our own writing. All that was left from Wikipedia was commentary on the film *Anonymous*, a few dates and book titles, and some of the organizational subheadings.

I probably shouldn't have mentioned Wikipedia at all, given the negative connotations that accompany it. But my fellow contributors to the book and I wanted an appendix that laid out all the pros and cons (and the history) of the Prince Tudor theory; we stand by what is there, warts and all. That is why one section in the Appendix is titled, "To prove or disprove the theory," and further states, "whether the theory has been (or even can be) proven," after which the underlying theme of *A Poet's Rage* is reiterated: The Prince Tudor theory has explanatory power that cannot be lightly dismissed. Most of the essays in the book were originally written from that point of view, and my idea behind *A Poet's Rage* was to invite readers to journey through the Elizabethan/Shakespearean landscape from that point of view, and (proof notwithstanding) then see how that might influence their understanding of what Shakespeare's plays and poems are about.

Second, I want to comment on how the essays in the book are perceived vis-à-vis the Prince Tudor theory. The other Appendix in the book (Appendix B, "The Monument Theory," not discussed in the review)

describes Hank Whittemore's Monument Theory of *The Sonnets*. What I want to emphasize is that the Monument Theory and the Prince Tudor theory *are not the same thing*, although some Oxfordians think they are. The core of the Monument Theory is that the first 126 sonnets are addressed to the 3rd Earl of Southampton as the Fair Youth, and that most of them (sonnets 27-126) are about his role in the Essex Rebellion, his conviction and death sentence, and the remarkable fact that he was not executed. That his life was spared demands explanation; history offers none.

One "possible" explanation is that Southampton was the son of Oxford and/or Elizabeth. But for anyone rejecting that possibility, the question remains: Why was he spared, and who decided that? Did the Poet (Oxford/Shakespeare) save him? If not, who did, and why? As Whittemore notes in his chapter on "Southampton's Tower Poem," even a mainstream scholar such as Prof. Lara Crowley (who discovered the poem) rejects the notion that Robert Cecil would have spared his life without asking for something in return. The Monument Theory posits that Oxford saved him by making a deal with Robert Cecil, and that he memorialized those events (and Southampton himself) in the Sonnets, fulfilling exactly what he wrote in Sonnet 81 ("Your monument shall be my gentle verse").

If the Prince Tudor Theory were to be completely disproven tomorrow, the Monument Theory would remain standing, and the underlying question would persist: Was Oxford/Shakespeare the one who saved Southampton from death by agreeing to be erased from history, and if so, what was the nature of their relationship that would compel him to make such a sacrifice?

William Boyle
Somerville, MA

If King James I and his henchmen poisoned Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as I allege in my historical fiction, *The Unmasking of Shakespeare: A Story* (available at Amazon.com)—and if they poisoned Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton, as well as his son, as some have supposed—the case for the Prince Tudor theory gets a mighty boost.

I don't write this letter to promote my book, which frankly is quite good, but to urge PT theorists to stick to their guns. The arguments against the PT theory are hardly compelling, and I suspect that over time the evidence in support will ultimately prevail, if only because of the Sonnets.

While I don't write to promote my book, I will happily quote from it: "Although King James had no reason to fear, it is perhaps the case that small persons in possession of absolute power are always afraid." But the king did have to suppress the truth to protect himself and his heirs "because the lines of succession

go on and on. And any son of Southampton, and any son of the sons, would threaten the preordained order of things."

As for my closing thought on Lord Oxford in my book, it is: "Reach out and he will touch you."

Larry Sklenar
Georgetown, SC

I would like to call your attention again to one short article in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* from Spring 2007: "'Leass for Making': Shakespeare Outed as a Liar?" by Dr. Frank Davis.

I found this article recently and it is very interesting. But I cannot agree with the author's explanation, which interprets the word "leass" in the meaning of "untruth, falsehood, lying." Additionally I find it possible that the supposed second *s* in "leass" could also be read as an *e*, making the word "lease" (even the form "leas(s)e" is thinkable, in case the writer dropped the ending *e*). I am no native speaker of English, but is not the first meaning of "lease" in the sense of "rent or hire" more interesting?

I find there is a good possibility that the unknown contemporary annotator of this copy of the First Folio meant something like this. His short comment "leass for making" could then be given the right meaning by adding some explanatory words. I would read his comment like that: "(Name taken as) 'lease for making' (the First Folio)."

The name is "William Shakespeare," of course, standing above the annotator's comment and pointing at the actor from Stratford. Stratford Will participated earlier in some performances of our poet's plays, but later became a theater shareholder, as it seems, because this proved much more lucrative.

Edward de Vere "leased" his name first in 1593-1594 (*Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*) and continued to do so several years later by publishing some quartos under the occupied name, now possibly paying for such "lease." After his death the owners of the manuscripts adopted his practice and didn't change what he had begun. The game finished with the creation of the wrong Folio ascription. Only the portrait is genuine and shows Edward de Vere in his forties. It may have been taken originally as a drawing for his family, when he had settled down with his second wife and was having a son.

If we read the annotator's strange words with the meaning I propose, it would fit well into the Oxfordian interpretation of the whole case. As Stratford Will had died in 1616, the editors could afford a last abuse of his name in the Folio.

Besides this detail (which is a heavy one, if hitting the truth), I may add that to me it is absolutely certain that Edward de Vere was "Shakespeare." The more you study the case, the more you know it.

I wonder why Dr. Davis (or any other reader)

did not express the same idea about the annotation. I find it misleading and more strange to interpret “leass” as “untruth, falsehood, lying.” This is more improbable. Dr. Davis does not take into consideration the first meaning of “lease.” He reports that Julia Cleave had discussed the same annotation in July 2005. She wanted to read “leass” as “least” or “less.” Dr. Davis notes that Cleave did go on to argue that “*the annotator had heard rumors about the collaborative nature of Shakespeare’s plays, or that Shakespeare was a front man for an anonymous author*” (my emphasis). The latter is exactly the case. The name/person of “William Shakespeare” is used here as a front man for someone else. But the only collaborative work done here was not about writing the plays, but about the creation of the First Folio. If the unknown annotator wanted to say what I suggest by using three puzzling words, then he knew, or had heard, something about the creation of the Folio.

Of course there must have been more than one person who knew the truth. It is hard to imagine that John Heminge and Henry Condell—the named editors—did not know that their fellow actor was not the real author of this collection. In case the contemporary annotator, obviously a lover of theater and literature, heard or knew something like this, he was right to set down a phrase like “lease for making” under the demonstratively first-placed name of Stratford Will. He may not have known that the real Stratford Will had died seven years before 1623, when the Folio was published. But the appearance of “William Shakespeare” again on the Folio caused him to make a very interesting remark. His annotation remains a pure riddle for Stratfordians, one of many, and it fits well into the Oxfordian explanation. But, after all, it was Oxford himself who began this strange behavior. He was only followed by others, his close witty friends and his posthumous editors. Those others made his hiding game “ever-living,” at least until today.

For Oxfordians the main question is: Why did Edward de Vere act like this? There must have been more than one reason coming together in the person of the earl himself. One must get to know him and become a psychologist to explain him. This is possible, but I have not the impression that Oxfordians have advanced much on this matter since Looney. On the contrary, some of them are discussing such silly and impossible stuff like the Prince Tudor Theory. There exist some good Oxfordian articles, good observations, good discoveries. But there is also a lot of fantasy. For example, in her industrious book, *Shakespeare Suppressed*, Katherine Chiljan argues about the “murder” of Southampton. One can only wait for the next busy Oxfordian to discover that Oxford himself had also been murdered. This is all very regrettable, because there is enough *truth* that can be discovered as well.

Edward de Vere used the name of the Stratford man like a “lease.” At first he did so purely for fun and wit, mainly in the dedications of 1593 and 1594. But after a pause of some years he continued to do so more in earnest, one might say, as if a second motivation (present in the beginning) had come over him more strongly. This was to his liking. After his death his true authorship could have been revealed by his friends. But they decided to bring forth his manuscripts under his self-selected pseudonym, finishing the whole business with the Folio of 1623. Some lover of theater and literature bought a copy and wrote under the name of the actor William Shakespeare the words “lease for making.” It must have been an open secret to the interested circle that the works of the late but unforgotten earl came forth now under his old pseudonym. But, unlike some Oxfordians, I believe a person like Ben Jonson had been hoaxed.

Hubert Danler
Achenkirch, Austria



GO GREEN!

If you're currently a member of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship who's receiving a print copy of this newsletter, please consider going “green” by agreeing to **receive subsequent issues electronically, in full color**. Not only will you be saving trees, you'll also be saving us some money. It costs about \$5.00 to print and mail each copy to US members, about \$6.00 to Canadian members, and about \$8.00 to members in other countries. The money we save can be put to other uses, such as the Research Grant Program announced in this issue.

To “go green,” simply send an email to newsletter@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org. [This applies only to the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*. If your membership category includes receiving our two annual journals, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*, you will still get print copies of them.]

What's the News?

Oxfordian Character Introduced on TV Series

Finally, an Oxfordian character is featured on an American television series. On the second season of *Granite Flats*, a mystery series set in a rural Colorado town during the height of the Cold War in the 60s, Professor Stanfield Hargraves was introduced; he's an Oxfordian. The role is played by veteran character actor Christopher Lloyd, perhaps best known for his roles as Dr. Emmett Brown in the *Back to the Future* film trilogy and as the demented Reverend Jim Ignatowski on the TV series *Taxi*. John Christian Plummer, who writes for the show, reports that *Hamlet* will have a growing influence on the story line this season, and that Lloyd "is amazing on the show." Coincidentally, Lloyd is a cousin of well-known Oxfordian Lewis Lapham, longtime editor of *Harper's* magazine.

Plummer also expressed thanks to "Mark Anderson for opening me to the authorship issue, and to all the bright, inquisitive Oxfordians I've read and met, who have all had an influence on my work."

Granite Flats premiered in 2013 with an initial run of eight episodes. The second season began on April 6, 2014, and also consists of eight episodes. It stars Jonathan Morgan Heit, Annie Tedesco, Richard Gunn and Charlie Plummer. It runs on BYUtv, which is available on more than 600 cable television systems nationwide, DirecTV (channel 374), Dish (channel 9403), and through a free streaming app on iTunes and other similar outlets.

Although Oxford's candidacy as the real Shakespeare has popped up on television occasionally (e.g., Oxford was the correct response to a 2012 *Jeopardy!* answer, and he was once suggested as the real author by the title character on the early 2000s sitcom *Malcolm in the Middle*), this is believed to be the first time that a continuing character on a television series is portrayed as an Oxfordian.

Keir Cutler's One-Man Show Auf Deutsch

Keir Cutler has been entertaining English speaking audiences since 2002 with his one-man show, "Is Shakespeare Dead?" adapted from Mark Twain's monograph in which Twain expressed his doubts about the Stratford man's claim to authorship. Cutler was thrilled to learn last year that a German actor was interested in doing a German version of the show.

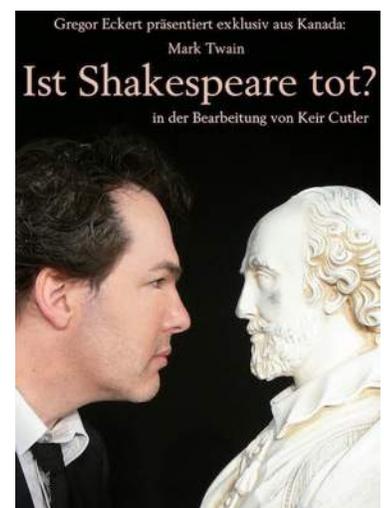
Gregor Eckert contacted Cutler about it in March 2013. Eckert has done several one-man shows, including one about Mark Twain. The two men started a correspondence, which culminated in the scheduled

premiere of "Ist Shakespeare Tot" in Hanover, Germany, on March 8, 2014.

Eckert was already aware that Mark Twain, who lived in Europe for several years, knew his Shakespeare. In his earlier one-man Twain show, "Gestatten!—Mark Twain," Eckert included the story of Twain's recollection about his days working on the Mississippi River, when Captain Ealer would quote long passages from Shakespeare while shouting orders to his crew, and how Twain said that for the rest of his life he couldn't read Shakespeare without hearing Captain Ealer's commands. That led Eckert to Cutler's "Is Shakespeare Dead?" Youtube video. Eckert then got in touch with Cutler, who, of course, gave his blessing to Eckert.

Eckert reported that translating the show was difficult. "It is less a problem of understanding," he told Cutler, "it is more to find the right words in my mother tongue. You can wear yourself down, I can tell you." One example was the word "troglodyte." Though the word exists in German, Eckert found that his first listeners during rehearsals found it strange and humorous; Eckert then decided to retain the word "as a comedy word," but had to take more time to explain the idea behind it. Eckert reported that his version of the one-man show took 60-65 minutes to perform, compared with Cutler's 45-minute English version.

The German premiere went well. Oxfordian Hanno Wember was in attendance, and wrote that Eckert did "an excellent job. The evening was brilliant and very entertaining." Since the premiere, Eckert has done the show for an audience of students and teachers. Eckert reported to Keir Cutler: "The students gave me positive feedback after my performance and we talked for about forty-five minutes. They liked it very much. But the most interesting thing was the teachers' reactions. They were quite reserving and noncommittal, and took the flyers. They said things like, 'You will hear from us,' and 'I was surprised that my students were so quiet [during your performance].' The literature class teacher, he didn't say anything, but the way he was looking at me made me feel like a criminal." Eckert is employed for the next few months as an entertainer on a cruise line, and plans to resume doing "Ist Shakespeare Tot" in the fall.



New York Times Blog Endorses Exploring Authorship Question

The *New York Times* educational blogspot, Learning.Blogs.NYtimes.com, recently endorsed discussing the authorship question as a way of getting students interested in Shakespeare. In connection with the 450th birthday of the Stratford man, the April 3, 2014, edition of the blog, which is aimed at educators, offered “seven broad ideas” to help teachers generate their students' interest in studying Shakespeare's works. Among them was “Investigating the Authorship Question.” After noting the *Times*' 2007 survey which found that 82 percent of the academics polled said there was not good reason to doubt the authorship, editors Amanda Christy Brown and Katherine Schullen quickly added that “the question lingers and fascinates students.” They provided links to *Times* articles about the issue. They suggested that teachers “guide students through a roundtable discussion and see what they decide. Does the mystery add to or take away from their reading and enjoyment of the plays?”

The other six “broad ideas” presented were: Teaching Shakespeare to Anyone, Anywhere; Teaching Shakespeare with Technology (Hamlet on Instagram); Does the Common Core Kick Shakespeare to the Curb; Exploring the Ubiquity of Shakespeare's Language; and Examining the Subtext of the Subconscious.

It's great to see a well-respected mainstream media outlet acknowledge that the Authorship Question is worthy of discussion in an educational forum. How many decades will pass until mainstream academia follows suit?

Justice Stevens Maintains His Interest in Authorship

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens continues to publicly mention the Shakespeare Authorship question. In connection with his newest book, *Six Amendments: How and Why We Should Change the Constitution*, Stevens was interviewed by the *New York Times* Sunday Book Review about his current reading habits; the twenty-item Q&A was published on April 6, 2014. In it Stevens referred to the Authorship issue no less than three times. Asked “What are your literary guilty pleasures? Do you have a favorite genre?” Stevens replied, “Writings about the authorship of the plays attributed to William Shakespeare.” Later he was asked, “Whom do you consider your literary heroes?” and replied, “The author of the plays attributed to William Shakespeare.” Lastly, when asked “You're hosting a literary dinner party. Which three writers are invited?” he responded, “Samuel Clemens, Charles Dickens and the author of the Shakespeare canon.”

There was no follow-up to any of these responses; while that may seem odd at first, it appears that this was not a live person-to-person interview, but rather a standard set of twenty questions that is submitted to subjects by mail or email.

Responses from Stratfordians were, of course, predictable. Gary Taylor employed the “authority” brushoff, stating that since he wouldn't presume to criticize any of Stevens's judicial opinions because he's not trained in the law, Stevens should not attempt to wade into the authorship question because he has no expertise in that area. And Harvard's Stephen Greenblatt attempted to coat his barbs with humor, stating that the notion that “Shakespeare didn't write Shakespeare” is as ridiculous as the notion that the current Earl of Oxford wrote all of Stevens's decisions. Ron Charles wrote a lengthy piece on the *Washington Post* blog, to which John Shahan, Chairman and CEO of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, offered a detailed point-by-point rebuttal (see <http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shahan-responds-to-washington-post-attack-on-justice-stevens/>).

As most Oxfordians know, Justice Stevens has long been interested in the Shakespeare Authorship question. He was one of three Supreme Court Justices who participated in the famous moot court at the National Law School at American University in 1987. He has written at least two law review articles in which he has discussed the issue. In 2009 he was honored as Oxfordian of the Year by the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship for his continuing interest and outspokenness. It should be noted that Stevens does not actually consider himself an Oxfordian, but rather someone who is convinced beyond reasonable doubt that Shakspeare of Stratford is not the author of the Shakespeare canon.

Justice Stevens was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Gerald Ford in 1975 and served for more than 34 years until his retirement in 2010 at age 90.

Greenblatt Apologizes for Comparing Oxfordians to Holocaust Deniers

As reported in April by Linda Theil in her blog, Harvard's Stephen Greenblatt has expressed regret for equating Oxfordians with Holocaust deniers in a 2005 letter to the *New York Times*. At the Folger Shakespeare Library's April seminar on Shakespeare biography (see separate article in this issue), Oxfordian Richard Waugaman struck up a conversation with Greenblatt during a break. In their conversation, Greenblatt denied ever having made such a comparison. In a later email to him, Waugaman cited Greenblatt's 2005 letter, in which he had written: “The idea that William Shakespeare's authorship of the plays and poems is a matter of conjecture and the idea that the 'authorship controversy'

taught in the classroom are the exact equivalent of current arguments that 'intelligent design' be taught alongside evolution. In both cases an overwhelming scholarly consensus, based on a serious assessment of hard evidence, is challenged by passionately held fantasies whose adherents demand equal time. The demand seems harmless enough until one reflects on its implications. Should claims that the Holocaust did not occur also be made part of the standard curriculum?"

Greenblatt replied promptly to Waugaman. While he couldn't deny having used the words he did, he claimed first that "it should be clear from the quotation you sent me that I was *not* . . . suggesting that Oxfordians were somehow the moral equivalent of Holocaust deniers" (our emphasis). He explained that the proper "context was a criticism of the *NY Times* for referring in a news article to Harold Bloom as a 'noted Stratfordian'. . . . My point was—and is—that the *NY Times* does not refer to astronomers as 'noted Copernicans' . . . because it accepts the general scholarly consensus as sufficiently weighty and evidence-based as to need no such designation. . . ."

To his credit, Greenblatt then stated that he "very much regret[ted] my Holocaust example I had not reflected—as I should have—that Oxfordians might draw the implication that I was likening THEM to a particularly abhorrent group" (his emphasis). He added that he regards "the denial of Shakespeare's authorship as a simple mistake, while I regard the denial of the Holocaust as an instance of moral bankruptcy and intellectual bad faith."

Russ Des Cognets (1923-2014)

With sadness we note the passing of longtime Oxfordian Russell "Russ" des Cognets, Jr., who died on March 13 at the age of 90. A native of Lexington, Kentucky, he graduated from Woodbury Forest School in Virginia in 1941. After military service during World War II, earning two battle stars, he graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1948 with a BS in agriculture. He bred thoroughbred horses and shorthorn cattle, and owned several historic farms in the Bluegrass region.

Russ served on the board of trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Society for many years, and was always a generous supporter of the Oxfordian cause. He financially assisted a number of Oxfordian researchers and helped get their books published. He underwrote a one-page column devoted to Oxfordian material in a mainstream publication, Louis Marder's *The Shakespeare Newsletter*. He made a significant financial contribution toward the establishment of the Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, and donated to the SARC a deed signed by Oxford that he had acquired in the 1950s. In April 1996 he sponsored a reception at the World Shakespeare Congress in Los Angeles, which offered orthodox scholars a chance to get to know some Oxfordians.

He is survived by his wife, Julie Crouch des Cognets, a son and two granddaughters.

Authorship Seminar August 8-15

The 2014 Concordia University Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre Summer Seminar will be held from August 8 to 15. It will convene in Portland, OR, on Friday evening, August 8, with a welcoming reception at the SARC. The program will continue in Portland at the SARC over the weekend, and, on Monday morning, August 11, the group will depart by bus for Ashland, home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Events in Ashland will include morning lectures, attending matinees of *Comedy of Errors* and *The Tempest*, an outdoor evening production of *Richard III*, and presentations by selected scholars and members of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival company. Following the matinee of *The Tempest*, the group will return to Portland. The final two days of the program will wrap up after lunch on Friday, August 15. The seminar package includes over 30 hours of lectures and discussions, theater tickets, printed materials, round-trip transportation between Portland and Ashland, and two nights lodging at the newly constructed McLaughlin Hall at Southern Oregon University.

The seminar instructor is Roger Stritmatter, Associate Professor of Humanities and Literary Studies at Coppin State University. He holds a Master's Degree in Anthropology from the New School for Social Research

and earned his PhD in Comparative Literature with a concentration in early modern studies from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His 2001 dissertation, *The Marginal Annotations of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible*, was nominated for the Bernheimer Award for the best dissertation in Comparative Literature. Stritmatter has published in a wide range of academic and popular contexts, and, with Lynne Kositsky, has coauthored the book *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare's The Tempest* (2013). He also serves as general editor of *Brief Chronicles: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Authorship Studies*.

Early reviews for the plays are favorable. Praising *The Comedy of Errors*, Roberta Kemp of *The Medford Mail Tribune* wrote, "If you wish to introduce Shakespeare to a whole new generation, there is no better way to do it than with this riotous, joyous, madcap celebration." Writing in *The Oregonian*, David Stabler noted that "*This Tempest* reflects many of the values the Festival holds dear: trusting veteran actors in key roles; emphasizing clarity of text; adding bold elements to freshen a masterpiece."

The total cost of the 2014 Summer Seminar is \$995. For more information and to secure an early reservation, contact interim seminar coordinator Earl Showerman at 541-899-8721 or earlees@charter.net.

Folger Conference Report: Authorship by Indirection

by Bill Boyle

One of the more remarkable events in the recent history of the authorship debate took place on April 3-5, 2014, at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. A three-day conference, "Shakespeare and the Problem of Biography," drew an all-star cast of speakers from the ranks of Shakespeare scholars, and a sold-out audience of 150+. Several Oxfordians attended, including Roger Stritmatter, Hank Whittemore, Peter Dickson, Richard Waugaman, James Warren, Shelly Maycock and myself. Perhaps other doubters were present as well.

The Folger's program description accurately summed up the conference's agenda:

There is no more iconic figure with whom to push forward a fresh critical evaluation of the aims and methods of literary biography than Shakespeare. Within the academy, textual analysis often denies biography any explanatory force, while popular conceptions of Shakespeare look to biography precisely for insight into the works. In the standoff, the genre of literary biography is lost as a subject of serious inquiry. On the 450th anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth, the Folger Institute Center for Shakespeare Studies will undertake a rigorous investigation of the multiple—and conflicted—roles biography plays in the reception of Shakespeare today. A cadre of influential scholars, many of whom have written biographies of Shakespeare, will focus discussion on such topics as the distinctions between authorship and agency, the interpretations of documentary evidence, the impact of methods of dating texts on an understanding of Shakespeare's life, the broadened context for that life of a more robust understanding of theatrical activity, and the possibility that biography is itself a form of historical fiction.

The stage was set on Thursday evening, when Brian Cummings (Anniversary Professor of English at the University of York) presented his Shakespeare Birthday lecture, "Shakespeare, Biography, and Anti-biography." The program description for his presentation reads:

The biography of Shakespeare is a paradox. Is he our greatest author precisely because we know so little about him, and his life remains a mystery? Shakespeare is at once a figure of cultural saturation and an indefinable enigma. We see him everywhere, yet we keep on looking for more. Do we feel our lack of knowledge so painfully because it relates to a figure we care so much about?

Professor Cummings discusses the problem of writing the life of Shakespeare in terms of the documentary history and its haunting sense of missing links.

Perhaps the reading of a writer creates a life of its own, somewhere between writer and reader, in the mystery that constitutes the act of literature.

As Cummings' talk proceeded, the major themes of the next two days were laid out. Most notable was the repeated emphasis on the obvious fact that we know so little about the man from Stratford. Cummings made this point a number of times, and it was echoed throughout the conference. It struck me as almost confessional, a simple acknowledgement of the chief problem in comparing the works of the writer with the life of the writer: in the case of Shakespeare there was nothing there, at least nothing that said "writer." As Cummings phrased it at one point,

. . . two centuries of attempts to write biographies without having any facts handy have resulted in the creation of a legendary Shakespeare that has nothing to do with the known facts of the Stratford man's life.

we don't have a problem of "lost years," but rather one of "a lost archive."

His talk was peppered with one interesting comment after another. In the opening section he stated: "The problem is more interesting than the solution," that "We remember things not the way they were, but the way we want them to be," that "Shakespeare was born in 1623 . . . his life began after he died," and that "Shakespeare's life has always been a construction after the fact."

Cummings then reached his main theme, that two centuries of attempts to write biographies without having any facts handy have resulted in the creation of a legendary Shakespeare that has nothing to do with the known facts of the Stratford man's life. Cummings started with Nicholas Rowe, who in 1709 needed a preface for his first collected edition of Shakespeare, and so "needed" for Shakespeare to have a life. Cummings stated that Rowe wrote not a "biography," but rather an "Introduction to the works."

Nonetheless, what Rowe wrote became the standard for the next century, picked up and expanded upon over several generations, ranging from David Garrick and the 1769 Shakespeare Jubilee ("would that we had a life



Shelly Maycock, Roger Stritmatter and Hank Whittemore at the Folger Shakespeare Library

worthy”) to Samuel Johnson, then on to Edmund Malone and James Boswell (“I cannot but regret that much has unquestionably been lost”) at the turn of the 19th century, to James Halliwell-Phillips in the 1840s (“the poet [in his time] was held in no general reverence”), and ends (in Cummings’ telling) in 1910 with researcher Charles Wallace standing in a room full of records saying, “Is this all there is?”

Cummings did mention Delia Bacon, remarking that “her work on the plays [*The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded*, 1856] is underappreciated,” and that she could be considered as attempting “historicism” in her efforts to penetrate the philosophical quality of the plays and relate them to an actual life. He then discussed memory and recollecting, touching on such writers as Marcel Proust, Henry James (*The Birthplace*, [1903], a story that depicts Shakespeare as “Him” [almost sacred], and interest in his actual life as an intrusion) and Jorge Luis Borges (*Shakespeare’s Memory* [1983], a story about a man who meets someone who possesses “Shakespeare’s memory,” but finds that possessing that still tells him nothing about the man or his works).

In his concluding remarks Cummings stated, “Biography is not necessary to historicism,” and, a few moments later, “Biography is not necessary to literary criticism.” His last words returned to Henry James and *The Birthplace*, with a final slide labeled “The Empty Room.” So, it seemed, the underlying message of the entire conference was laid out: “Yes, we have no facts, but no, we don’t need them anyway, and maybe we shouldn’t even be trying too hard to get at the man’s private life.”

Most comments lauded Cummings’s talk, and it was mentioned in subsequent Q&A sessions as having been a perfect opening for the themes of the conference. During Cummings’s Q&A, Dr. Roger Stritmatter asked about Ben Jonson and the First Folio, noting that Jonson’s statement to “look not on his picture, but his book” seemed to imply that Shakespeare’s biography is in his works; he further asked whether Keats’s line that

“Shakespeare lived a life of allegory and his plays are comments on it” didn’t also say the same thing. Cummings answered, “It depends on what you mean by allegory,” a classic tap-dancing answer, perfectly fitting for an event being held in Washington, DC.

Over the next two days it became apparent that the authorship debate itself, while not on the agenda and seemingly not even to be spoken of, was nonetheless the “elephant in the room.” It struck me that nearly every paper presented addressed topics that those of us involved in the authorship debate have grappled with for years. At a conference billed as “Shakespeare and the Problem of Biography,” how could they not?

On several occasions Delia Bacon and the Baconians came up, first in Cummings’s lecture, and again in a presentation on the final day (“Secrets and Ciphers; Decoding the Decoders,” Prof. William H. Sherman, University of York) that jokingly showed various Baconians getting lost in cipher codes. The word “Oxfordian” was uttered once, at the very end of the last day, when Prof. Graham Holderness (University of Hertfordshire) mentioned the movie *Anonymous* during a Q&A and remarked that its depiction of Oxford was a disservice to Oxfordians since it showed a Shakespeare who was not a man of the theater.

My initial reaction to the conference is that it represents a real attempt to deal with the authorship debate, but only by indirection. I’m borrowing that word from one paper, “Anne by Indirection,” in which the life of Elizabeth Quiney (wife of the guy who wrote, but never sent, the only known letter to the Stratford man) was parlayed into a “probable” portrait of Anne Hathaway—believe it or not—and that “probable” portrait could then tell us things about her husband. Over and over the same themes kept popping up: Can a text be interpreted and understood without a lot of facts known about the author? Is the author “in” his works somehow, whether he means to be or not? Does the biography of the author matter at all? Why are so few facts available to us about this particular author? What is the role of generations of critics and their criticism in understanding Shakespeare? What is the relationship between biographies of an author and criticisms of the author’s work?

Let’s remember it was thirty years ago that Charlton Ogburn, Jr., published *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, reigniting the authorship debate for a new generation. Just a year later William F. Buckley featured Ogburn and his book on *Firing Line*. In 1987 came the moot court in Washington, DC, before three U.S. Supreme Court justices. And two years later came the *Frontline* documentary, “The Shakespeare Mystery.” The debate has raged on since then. But through it all, mainstream scholars have stood firm on two things: they had the right guy, and biography doesn’t matter that much in literary criticism anyway.

Interestingly, at this conference they continued to hold firm on having the right guy, but the notion that biography doesn't matter came up in talk after talk, and, I would say, is under siege and may even be on its way out. That's a big deal, especially if their guy (the Stratford man) has no real biography to speak of (and, as noted earlier, the problem of having so few facts was commented on throughout the conference).

Other papers presented could be grouped into several thematic categories:

Writing history: In addition to Cummings's remarks on Nicholas Rowe's 1709 version of Shakespeare's life (and all that followed), attention was also paid to the entries on Shakespeare in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB), which include Sidney Lee's entry at the turn of the 20th century and Peter Holland's new, revised entry (2004). Holland and DNB editor Lawrence Goldman were both present.

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"We know a great deal about Shakespeare, but most of it is truly trivial," Goldman stated. "Most of it would not make it into other biographies, where more is known." He continued that both articles form a narrative, though the new biography (Holland's) is more integrated. In pointing out differences, Goldman noted that Lee speculated a lot and put in his personal views. Lee emphasized Shakespeare's imagination; in the first version of the entry he wrote that the Sonnets reflected Shakespeare's "heart," but later changed that to what Goldman described as the "literary exercises" point of view.

Goldman also noted that while recent "popular" biographies of Shakespeare give us the Shakespeare we

"want," that cannot be the approach of the DNB. "The purpose of the DNB," he stated, "is to hold a mirror up to nature and do no more than that." During the Q&A, Goldman expanded on his views, saying that "I am not hostile to speculation," and adding that in literary biography "both the subject and the biography writer are concerned with words ... and the interpretation of words."

Holland noted that when he was engaged to rewrite the DNB's Shakespeare entry, "I was charged to write the actual life as a smaller part of the entry, and the afterlife as the majority." It struck me that all this DNB discussion was in keeping with one of the themes of this conference, which was to fully acknowledge the overall lack of information about the author's actual life, and the trivial nature of those facts that do exist. Hence, there was a continuing emphasis on the "afterlife," the vast array of posthumous literary criticism about Shakespeare's plays and poems, written over centuries. All of this naturally engenders a resistance to efforts aimed at matching up the literary criticism to an actual life so barren of useful information.

Religion: Shakespeare's religion came up several times, in both the DNB session and later in a presentation by Prof. Julia Reinhard Lipton, "Believing in Shakespeare / Shakespeare's Beliefs: Religion and the Dilemmas of Drama." More than once Oxfordian Peter Dickson asked provocative questions on this subject, about which he has become very knowledgeable. One such question during the DNB session about Shakespeare's possible Catholicism was addressed by Goldman, who noted that Sidney Lee would have been very anti-Catholic given his own Jewish heritage, and that may have influenced how he wrote his DNB article. Lipton's own presentation touched directly on whether Shakespeare was Catholic, but offered no definitive answer. Instead, some of the arguments for and against were laid out, and it was noted that establishing Shakespeare as a Catholic would certainly open up the plays to new interpretations. The religion issue was also discussed in light of how Shakespeare himself has become an object of worship ("believing in Shakespeare"). In the end the only conclusion offered was that more biographies were needed that explored the issues of beliefs and believing. Again, Peter Dickson posed a question during the Q&A, asking directly about Catholicism and the Blackfriars House purchase of 1613, and how that raised serious questions about how the Stratford man could engage in seemingly risky behavior and pay no price. The panel did not respond directly to Dickson's remark. The Q&A concluded with Folger Shakespeare Library Director Michael Witmore saying, "we want more facts, that is part of the problem of biography."

"The life is in his plays": While the DNB might have been emphasizing the afterlife over the actual life, several other presentations honed in on the idea that that "actual life" was indeed embedded in the plays. First,

Prof. Joseph Roach (Yale) spoke on “Biography and Celebrity Culture,” during which he emphasized the power of the text itself (with a story about David Garrick performing the title role in *King Lear*, bringing everyone in the audience and onstage to tears, and finishing with a close, heartfelt reading of lines between Arthur and his mother Constance in *King John*). Roach concluded with the clear statement that “Shakespeare’s life is in his plays.”

Prof. Graham Holderness spoke on “Shakespeare and Son,” referring to Shakespeare’s son Hamnet, who died at age eleven in 1596. He put up on the screen Ben Jonson’s 1603 poem “On my first son,” about the death of his son at age seven, and then asked the obvious question: Why didn’t Shakespeare express his grief over Hamnet in a similar manner? His answer was pure authorship, since he said, as have others (including Bill Bryson, Stephen Greenblatt and James Joyce), “well, maybe he did,” and it was in *Hamlet* (Holderness did emphasize that the name similarities were not connected, since the actual origin of the name Hamlet is clear). But he certainly was embracing the idea that the actual life lived (in this case, the *fact* of a son who died and the grief that must have followed) *can* appear in the author’s works, and perhaps be an important part of them.

A Man of the theater: Another approach that also used the works to learn about the man was an exploration of Shakespeare as a man of the theater. Here again the works become *prima facie* evidence of who Shakespeare was, meaning here that he was clearly a man of the theater. The works themselves prove it. In “Shakespeare, Man of the Theater,” Prof. Lois Potter (University of Delaware) stated, “Shakespeare was totally a man of the theater, not just someone who wrote for it.” She observed that “theater is a collaborative art,” and that Shakespeare was aware of the difference between plays and “literature.” She floated the idea that Shakespeare therefore may have thought of himself as “inferior,” and so did not want to be buried in Westminster Abbey. The most remarkable part of Potter’s talk was her statement that, since there was a division of authorial labor in a collaborative environment, perhaps Shakespeare “the poet” wrote only dialogue (as evidenced in the *Thomas More* Hand D fragment), and if so, then perhaps he didn’t have to read all the sources ... someone else did. Potter immediately added, “I don’t mean to make him out to be a King of rags and patches” (and I thought to myself, you just did).

The “man of the theater” theme came up again in a later Q&A, when Holderness mentioned Potter’s presentation as an example of the scholarship which bolstered our knowledge of the Stratford man, then commenting that the movie *Anonymous* did not depict Oxford as such a man (a point with which many Oxfordians would agree). But in so doing Holderness was also embracing, as he had in his talk on “Shakespeare and

Son,” the notion that there *must be* links between the works and the life of the author.

Portraits: There was one presentation about the numerous purported images of the author, presented by Tarnya Cooper of the National Portrait Gallery. A number of slides were shown, covering all the familiar portraits we have all seen over the years. Conspicuous by its absence was the Ashbourne Portrait (owned by the Folger, and probably hanging not far away). This struck me as yet another instance of avoiding the authorship debate, and especially avoiding the Earl of Oxford. The presentation ended with a striking pair of images on the screen, the familiar portrait of Ben Jonson in his simple plain attire with a white collar, accompanied by the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, eerily similar to Jonson, also in simple attire with a simple white collar (no aristocratic looking ruff or lace). I couldn’t help thinking, “Well, here’s another message, at least for those reading between the lines.”

Dates, facts and anecdotes: The conference’s clearest example of using speculation to bolster biography came up in Prof. Lena Cowen Orlin’s “Anne by Indirection.” Based on just a few historical facts involving Thomas Quiney and his businesswoman wife Elizabeth, Orlin proceeded to build a case for using Elizabeth Quiney as an example of how Anne Hathaway may have lived. From there the professor suggested that we might “possibly” be able to learn something about the

Prof. Stephen Greenblatt of Harvard lamented that the public was demanding “popular” biographies of Shakespeare, even as experts such as he kept insisting biography didn't matter. “Interest is high,” he said, despite our teaching students that what matters is the text. “We have failed,” he quipped.

married life of Anne and her husband Will.

Prof. Margreta de Grazia (University of Pennsylvania) took yet another look at Nicholas Rowe’s 1709 “biography” (Rowe came up a lot over the three days). She noted that the only solid facts in his Introduction were the author’s birth date and his death date. All the rest were anecdotes, all of which were suspect, and ultimately disposable. She added that these anecdotes always depict Shakespeare in trouble (whatever

that may mean), but never tell us about the man's character or how he lived, or how he may have evolved over a lifetime. She concluded that the anecdotes are really comments about the works (i.e., the "afterlife") rather than the actual life (1564-1616) of the author, yet again reinforcing the conference's central theme.

The "necessity of biography": The final talk, "The Necessity of Biography," was by Prof. David Schalkwyk (University of London and University of Warwick), one of the conference organizers. His final summation began with observations on the academic approach to the problem, replete with references to the "the intentionality" that must be found when one "encounters" a text, and how there is a "necessity of biography" when one attempts to connect the "author" and the "author function." He said that he agreed that "biography is not necessary," but then added, "Well, yes ...[but]...." He threw out an interesting proposition: "What would happen to Shakespeare studies if we discovered that Shakespeare had never worked in the theater?" The answer was, simply, that much scholarship would have to be discarded, and with that answer he made the point that biography does indeed matter. "Biography is the function," he said, "of a deep need and desire," and there is the "role of love in the necessity of biography." This last line literally ended the conference, and for me, at least, resonated with much of my own thinking on why it matters who Shakespeare really was. It was almost as if, for just a moment, Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians were all in agreement.

In these later sessions the discussion came back to where it had started with Cummings's opening talk, to the overriding question, "Does the biography of the author matter in critiquing or understanding the works?" During the last panel ("Where are we now?" which included David Schalkwyk and Katherine Duncan-Jones) Prof. Stephen Greenblatt of Harvard lamented that the public was demanding "popular" biographies of Shakespeare, even as experts such as he kept insisting biography didn't matter. "Interest is high," he said, despite our teaching students that what matters is the text. "We have failed," he quipped.

Ironically, in 2004 Greenblatt had written his own entry in this field of popular biography (*Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*). He begins chapter one with the words, "Let us imagine," and in the preface he writes:

This is a book, then, about an amazing success story that has resisted explanation: it aims to discover the actual person who wrote the most important body of imaginative literature of the last one thousand years. Or rather, since the actual person is a matter of well-documented public record, it aims to tread the shadowy paths that lead from the life he lived into the literature he created.

A "story that has resisted explanation ... actual person ... shadowy paths that lead from the life he lived into the literature he created." One could only wonder why Greenblatt didn't quote his own words during his panel. They couldn't have been more on topic.

Listening to Greenblatt, a scholar and author who actually engaged the authorship debate directly with *Will in the World* (which, I am convinced, would never have been written without the threat of the Oxfordian movement), it struck me that he really embodied the contradictions and conundrums that permeated the conference. Here the cream of Shakespeare scholarship was gathered together at the most prestigious Shakespeare institution in North America to address a topic which they had no intention of even mentioning—"Authorship debate? What authorship debate? There is no authorship debate."

The closest the conference came to the authorship debate was in ridiculing Baconian ciphers ("Secrets and Ciphers; Decoding the Decoders," by Prof. William H. Sherman, University of York), a talk clearly aimed at the current authorship threat—Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford—without having to mention him. That presentation ended with a quote from William Friedman in the early 1950s when, after meeting with Baconian Walter Arensberg about his elaborate code-breaking claims, Friedman wrote in his diary that Arensberg was delusional and didn't even know it. The audience laughed, and why not? Even I laughed. A couple of years later Friedman and his wife Elizebeth published *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined* (1957), which was a death blow to Baconian codes. But arguments against codes have nothing to do with the arguments for, let alone the strengths of, the Oxfordian case. And that's a fact.

Holderness made a statement during a final Q&A that gets right to the problem of having no real biography with which to compare the author's writings, namely that it results in a situation in which *any* interpretations of the text can go anywhere when unbounded by *any* facts about the author: "What's to be done if anything can mean anything to anyone?" he asked. Prof. John Drakakis (University of Stirling), to whom the question was directed, replied, "Yes, it's a problem . . . the debate will go on, it won't ever end."

To conclude, let's remember the refrain that ran throughout the conference, that "biography doesn't matter," a sentiment echoed by professors Jack Lynch (Rutgers), John Drakakis and Stephen Greenblatt, to name three presenters who explicitly said text is more important than biography. But the opposite view—that the life of the author and his work are connected, and that matters—was also presented, most ably in the presentation of Prof. Roach, who highlighted the power of Shakespeare's words centuries after they were written, and concluded, "Shakespeare's life is in his plays."

That indeed is the authorship dilemma in a nutshell: "Biography doesn't matter" versus "the author's life is in

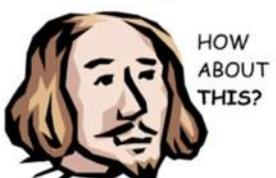
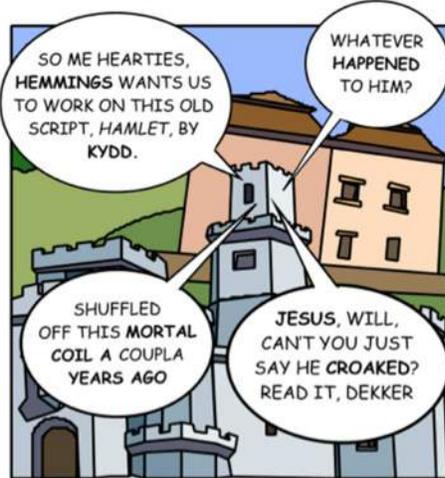
his works.” Left unaddressed was the proposition that all the problems discussed at the conference might emanate from having the wrong person as the author. Brian Cummings said in his opening lecture that what we have is not a problem of “lost years,” but rather one of “a lost archive.” I think that those who have ever been engaged in the authorship debate over the past 150 years would

respond, “No, what we really have is a problem of a lost author.” Fix that, and most of what was discussed at this conference would be resolved.



DR. Y. ASDUST RESOLVES THE AUTHORSHIP QUESTION

by Michael Egan



WHO'D BEAR THE SCORNS AND FLATTERY OF THE WORLD, BLAH BLAH BLAH, WHEN THAT HE MAY HIS FULL QUIETUS MAKE WITH A BARE BODKIN, BLAH BLAH BLAH. CONSCIENCE MAKES COWARDS OF US ALL., ETC.



From the Editor:

Alvearie Interesting...

Yes, April 23 marked the 450th anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare to much of the world; of course, no one knows exactly when William Shakspere of Stratford was born, but why should that fact give anyone pause? Among the most interesting news items was the formal announcement on April 21 by two New York rare book dealers that they had discovered what they believe to be the Bard's personal dictionary.

The two dealers, George Koppelman and Daniel Wechsler, have published *Shakespeare's Beehive: An Annotated Elizabethan Dictionary Comes to Light*, in which they present their research on a copy of the second edition of John Baret's *Alvearie* (1580). That volume, which they purchased on eBay in 2008 from a Canadian seller for \$4300, was heavily annotated by its owner, and Koppelman and Wechsler are convinced that the owner was indeed Shakespeare himself. Interested readers can examine digitized images of the *Alvearie* on their website, www.shakespearesbeehive.com.

Their "discovery" has attracted much attention, including a lengthy article by Adam Gopnik in the April 28 issue of *The New Yorker*. As Gopnik explains, Baret's *Alvearie* (the word is a variant of apiary, or beehive) is a "compendium of allusions" in which an English word is listed together with its French, Latin and Greek equivalents and, in some cases, a citation or proverb illustrating the usage. Koppelman and Wechsler have sought to establish connections between the handwritten annotations in the book and Shakespeare's works. They maintain that the "totality of" the connections establishes Shakespeare's ownership of the book. As they put it in their book, "We fully expect that this assessment will not just be upheld, but upheld rather generously in our favor, so overwhelming is the totality of the linguistic evidence." Among the many "connections" include a handwritten mark next to the word "Thawe," which is defined as "resolve that which is frozen" (thus pointing to Hamlet's use of "Thaw" and "resolve" in the same line), the annotator's repeated drawings of capital letters W and S in the margins, and the annotator's writing of "Bucke-bacquet" on a blank page at the end of the book (the word "buck-basket" is found six times in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*).

Gopnik, who journeyed with Koppelman and Wechsler to look at the *Alvearie* himself (it's kept in a vault in Brooklyn), astutely points out some of the difficulties the two book dealers will encounter in their efforts to have the volume authenticated as the Bard's own. First, he notes that, because "Shakespeare wrote Elizabethan English, any work of Elizabethan English is going to contain echoes of Shakespeare. . . . [E]specially where the volume is a thesaurus designed to point from one word to others like it." He also offers "the argument from Inherent Improbability"—that of all the possible persons who could have annotated such a work, the copy that came to light belonged to the very person that the authors most wanted it to belong to.

Gopnik also notes that Koppelman and Wechsler are rare book dealers and have made no secret of their desire to sell the *Alvearie* "for a good sum," possibly millions of dollars. However—and perhaps most interestingly—Wechsler said that

he would refuse to sell it to an Oxfordian. "If the scholarly community says, 'No way, guys,' . . . and the Oxfordians say yes, and offer to buy it for a price? I would still say no. I'm extremely uncomfortable with that idea."

Neither Gopnik nor Koppelman and Wechsler mention that there exist solid connections between Oxford and John Baret's *Alvearie*. The book is dedicated to William Cecil, Oxford's guardian and father-in-law. Its expenses were largely underwritten by Sir Thomas Smith, one of Oxford's early tutors, and Alexander Nowell. And the first edition of the *Alvearie* in 1573 (which included only English, French and Latin words; Greek words were added in the second edition) contained an introductory poem by Arthur Golding, the only known original poem by him. Golding, of course, is named as the translator of *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (1567), but many Oxfordians believe that Oxford himself was responsible for the work; a twenty-three-year-old Oxford could easily have supplied a poem for Golding to put his name to in 1573.

Reaction to Koppelman and Wechsler's announcement from the mainstream academic world was prompt and, for the most part, not encouraging. Jason Scott-Warren of Cambridge University blogged that "we can all go to bed at the usual time. There is absolutely no reason to believe that Shakespeare was the annotator of the volume." Leading Stratfordian apologist Jonathan Bate stated that, after a quick glance, he was "very skeptical," and was convinced that the annotator's "handwriting certainly isn't Shakespeare's." Michael Witmore, director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, and Heather Wolfe, the Folger's curator of manuscripts, wrote on a Folger blog that much work will need to be done on the book, outlined some of the tests to be employed, and said further that, while the book itself is certainly worthy of study, "it is premature to join Koppelman and Wechsler in what they have described as their 'leap of faith.'"

Writing in *The New Yorker*, Adam Gopnik, like Bate, noted that the annotator's "handwriting just doesn't look like Shakespeare's." This observation naturally invites the further question of just what handwriting *does* look like "Shakespeare's"? A messy hand exhibiting unfamiliarity with forming letters? Any competent scholar would have to conclude that, if the only examples of "Shakespeare's" handwriting are the six signatures, which don't even resemble each other very much, we do not have any sample worthy of comparison to any other. Some orthodox scholars still claim that "Hand D" on the manuscript copy of *Sir Thomas More* is Shakespeare's (though many do not, and Gopnik says it "might be" Shakespeare's [his italics]), but the claim is totally unsubstantiated.

While Gopnik's essay was thoughtful and generally even-handed, he is obviously a Stratfordian through and through (I'll bet he was an English lit major). For example, he writes of the Stratford man's "undoubted friendship with [printer Richard] Field," which "would easily have led him to" the print shop of Henry Denham, who printed the *Alvearie*. He's "sure that Shakespeare was, like many self-taught people, a bookish guy." In another section of the essay, he writes of the continuing efforts of the Sullivan family in Ontario to have the Sanders portrait—a painting of a youthful man bearing the date "1603"—accepted as that of Shakespeare. The University of Guelph has become involved in those efforts. Gopnik writes of one "overwhelming problem" with the portrait: "it does not

look much like Shakespeare.” Gopnik’s reasoning? That only “one true image of Shakespeare” exists, the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio, and that “We can be certain that the Droeshout engraving looked like Shakespeare because his friend Ben Jonson said that it did in a dedicatory poem placed right beside it.” However, University of Guelph researchers now claim that a new computer program has enabled them to identify no less than thirteen similarities between the two portraits.

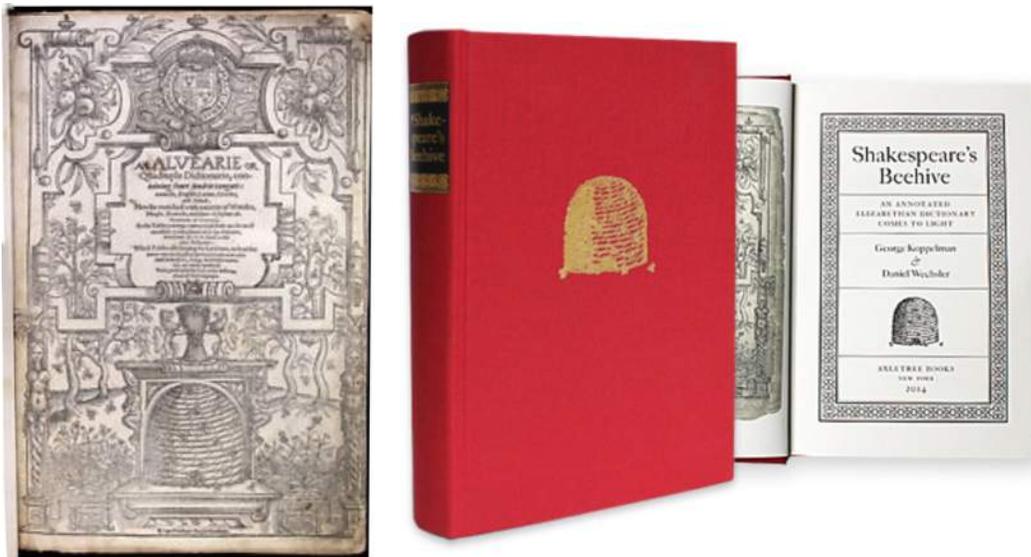
Gopnik apparently attended the Folger Library’s April conference on Shakespeare biography (see separate article in this issue), and seems to have come down on

the side of those who believe that, by golly, there *is* a connection between an author’s life and his or her works: “To build too high a wall between life and work is not to ‘get’ the time. It is to miss a vital part of what the time was actually like. . . .” Amen.

Oh, and by the way, could someone please let Koppelman and Wechsler know that I’m willing to bid \$200 (plus shipping) for their copy of Baret’s *Alvearie*, sight unseen, and regardless of what academia has to say about who annotated it? Just don’t tell them I’m an Oxfordian.



Alex McNeil



Nominations to Board of Trustees

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Board Nominations Committee has begun the vetting process for candidates for election to the Board of Trustees at the annual membership meeting in September during the conference in Madison, WI. According to the SOF bylaws, nominations to the Board of Trustees are the responsibility of this committee. Nominations to the SOF Board and to the office of President may also be initiated by written petition of at least ten members in good standing, so long as the petition is submitted to the Nominations Committee no less than sixty days before the annual meeting. This year nomination by petition will be closed after July 15. For further information on the process of Board nominations, consult the SOF bylaws (<http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/>) or email Nominations Committee Chairman Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net.

The Nominations Committee is also responsible for nominating a candidate for President. The nominees for three-year terms and the nominee for a one-year term as President shall constitute the official slate of Board candidates proposed to the membership. This slate of Board candidates, plus those qualifying petition candidates, will provide short biographical sketches to the Nominations Committee, which will be distributed to SOF members at least thirty days prior to the annual meeting.

As the number of qualified Board candidates currently exceeds the number of expected vacancies, in 2014 the election for SOF Board positions will be by mail ballot of the members. Those candidates receiving the largest number of votes will be appointed to three-year term positions on the Board of Trustees. The results of the election will be posted on the SOF website immediately after the election and reported in the fall *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*.

Oxfordians Participate in “International Shakespeare” Conference at UMass

by Earl Showerman

The Translation Center of the University of Massachusetts, in partnership with the Center for Interdisciplinary Renaissance Studies and the English Department and Comparative Literature Program, sponsored the first annual conference on “International Shakespeare: Translation, Adaptation, Performance” from March 7 to 9, 2014, at the University’s main campus in Amherst. *Brief Chronicles* editor Roger Stritmatter and I submitted proposals that were accepted and we both participated fully in the program, which featured speakers from France, Austria, Holland, Finland and Brazil, as well as video participation with scholars from Iran and Singapore. Among the topics discussed were translation, production, imitation and reception of Shakespeare worldwide, integrating theories on literary sources, personal identity, political perspectives, readership and censorship.

The program opened with a screening of a Russian production of Boris Pasternak’s *Hamlet*. The first of three outstanding keynote addresses was delivered by Jean-Michel Deprats of the University of Paris, who has successfully translated a number of Shakespeare dramas for the French stage. His talk, “Shakespeare in French Garb: Lexical and Prosodic Untranslatability versus Theatrical—Oral and Gestic—Translatability,” emphasized the difficulties inherent in literal translation which can make a text virtually undecipherable. His approach is to develop a creative transposition of the original to deal with the conflicts that arise between semantics, poetics, meaning and performability. Deprats noted translation becomes particularly difficult with multilingual passages such as the Latin lesson in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and that literal French translations of Shakespeare tend to be too slow and dense for the stage. He emphasized the importance of verbal economy, to preserve form over content. Shakespeare’s dramatic verse is a language of action, what Deprats termed “gestic” poetry.

Brazilian scholars Elizabeth Ramos and Roberto Ferreira da Rocha both spoke on the response to the political environment in which Shakespeare’s plays are being translated and performed. Ramos’ paper, “Much Ado about Obscenity,” and Rocha’s, “*Hamlet* in Dark Times,” addressed the impact of translating Shakespeare during the political oppression of the 1980s in Brazil.

The second keynote address was by MIT Professor Peter Donaldson, who spoke on “The Global Shakespeare Project and the Future of Digital Shakespeare.” Donaldson demonstrated the MIT Shakespeare Project website, <http://shakespeares.mit.edu/>, which includes The Global Shakespeares Video & Performance Archive, a

“collaborative project providing online access to performances of Shakespeare from many parts of the world as well as essays and metadata provided by scholars and educators in the field. The idea that Shakespeare is a global author has taken many forms since the building of the Globe playhouse.” Another feature of the MIT website is “*Hamlet on the Ramparts*,” an open-access educational website with selected materials optimized for education on *Hamlet* Act I, scenes 4 and 5, including archival materials in all media and sample lesson plans. Another feature, the Shakespeare Electronic Archive, includes all variant pages of the First Folio in digital facsimile, copies of the first and second quartos of *Hamlet*, and more than 1,000 *Hamlet* illustrations and several films.

Roger Stritmatter’s paper, “‘s mall Latin and less Greek’: Anatomy of a Misquotation,” focused on Ben Jonson’s dedicatory epistle from the 1623 Shakespeare Folio, which Stritmatter identifies as “among the most widely misinterpreted lines in the history of English literature.” He challenged the “widespread misconception that Jonson is invidiously comparing Shakespeare’s knowledge of classical languages to his own,” and that the playwright he is praising in comparison to thundering Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, had little training in classical literature. Examining Jonson’s subjunctive voice, Stritmatter concluded that Jonson’s text “gives every appearance of a contrary-to-the fact conditional,” which is supported by the abundant evidence for Shakespeare’s capacity for translation of foreign language texts and for adaptation of both classical and contemporaneous literature.

I presented a paper that examined possible influences of Greek Old Comedy on Shakespeare’s Athenian romp, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, including the possible influence of Aristophanes’ masterpiece, *The Birds*. Both *The Birds* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* are festive comedies with protagonists who are refugees from Athenian law. Both conclude with consecrated marriages that are followed by epilogues. More importantly, both plays represent humans metamorphosed into grotesque animal forms, and both reference magical plants. The two comedies are self-consciously literate, enriched by an array of literary sources and topical allusions. In *The Birds*, Aristophanes’ Hercules is portrayed as a gluttonous bully, while Shakespeare’s ravenous Bully Bottom proclaims he could “play er’cles rarely” and bombasts out a parody of Seneca’s *Hercules Oetaeus*. Both dramas represent erotic cupidity as the primary source for farce. Finally, the identification of Queen Elizabeth and the French Duc d’Alencon with Shakespeare’s Titania and Bottom confirms that *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is emblematic of Aristophanic political satire (this paper was previously presented at the Toronto Shakespeare Authorship Conference in 2013).

Conference co-director Dr. Marie Roche completed the panel discussion with a presentation on the influence

of Plato's *Cratylus* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The final keynote address was delivered by Professor Edwin Gentzler, chair of the conference and director of the Translation Center at the University of Massachusetts, who spoke on "Translating, Rewriting, and Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*." Gentzler traced the history of productions, adaptations, translations, and film versions of Shakespeare's comedy, emphasizing the contributions of the German romanticists in enriching the cultural dissemination of this magical narrative. Although the conference program did not include any presentations directly related to the attribution of Shakespeare's works, it did provide many opportunities for scholars from around the world to share their insights and to respond to each other's perspectives on the origins and transmission of Shakespeare's dramas.



Book Review

AKA Shakespeare: A Scientific Approach to the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

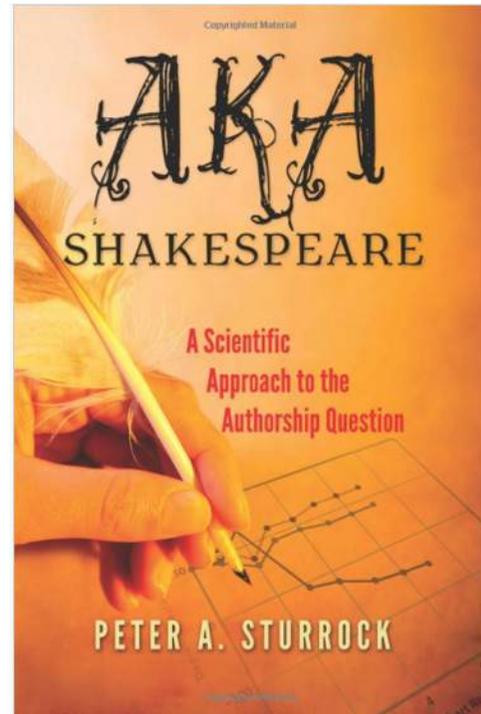
by Peter A. Sturrock, PhD

Exoscience Publishing (2013)

Reviewed by Roger Stritmatter

Peter Sturrock's *AKA Shakespeare: A Scientific Approach to the Shakespeare Authorship Question*, which seeks to involve readers in evaluating evidence in the authorship question through statistical methods, comes with its own interactive website to help readers draw their own conclusions (<http://www.aka-shakespeare.com/>). A professor emeritus of applied physics and astrophysics at Stanford, with more than a passing knowledge of statistical solutions to various applied problems, Sturrock introduces readers to the statistical method known as Bayesian analysis, a tool and method of inference for updating the prior probabilities of a given conclusion based on the incorporation of new, independently derived data. Bayesian methods "derive the posterior probability as a consequence of two antecedents, a prior probability and a 'likelihood function' derived from a probability model for the data to be observed" (Wikipedia, "Bayesian inference").

As a physicist and statistician, Sturrock's approach to the authorship question is novel, insightful and controversial! The book has been criticized on several grounds. For one thing, it asks readers to apply numbers to essentially non-quantitative data (how can you apply a hard number to the historical reality, however significant



it may seem to be, that *Hamlet*, according to many historically informed scholars, parodies Edward de Vere's father-in-law in the persona of Polonius? Or that the 1623 Folio is dedicated to Oxford's son-in-law? Or that Oxford's cousins, the "fighting Veres" Horatio and Francis, seem to be the prototypes for Francesco and Horatio in *Hamlet*? Or that the protagonist of *All's Well That Ends Well* is, like de Vere himself, the object of a "bed trick" by his devoted and much put-upon wife Helena? These may be probative elements of the case, but how can one assign numbers to them?

Another complaint is that because Sturrock isn't a professional novelist, his characters come across as one-dimensional and uniformly too "Carmel." Sturrock has created four characters who discuss various authorship issues throughout the book. To some extent these objections are valid. Few writers have Lynne Kositsky's flair for utterly authentic dialogue. Nevertheless, I'm finding the book an even better read the second time around for several reasons, not the least of which is that even Sturrock's somewhat stilted characters still make for a much more entertaining read than your average statistics textbook. Moreover, the key concept of Bayesian statistics on which Sturrock primarily relies to help guide the reader to his or her own conclusions, known as Degrees of Belief, is often used in a subjective sense, so his method is by no means unprecedented (see B. De Finetti, *Theory of Probability*, 2 vols., 1974). The method is not "scientific" in the traditional sense, but it does allow for readers to assign their own best estimates of probability to a range of evidentiary problems and accurately evaluate the relative merits of one or another hypothesis based these assessments.

Another, more important reason is this: regardless of whether the methodology Sturrock invites his readers to apply is ultimately sound from a scientific point of view (whatever that might mean in this case), the Bayesian procedures he walks the reader through are, if nothing else, a powerful heuristic for assessing the cumulative weight of the circumstantial evidence for Oxford's authorship. As J.T. Looney wrote nearly a hundred years ago:

[Circumstantial evidence is taken] mistakenly by some to be evidence of an inferior order, but in practice [is] the most reliable proof we have. . . . The predominating element in what we call circumstantial evidence is that of coincidences. A few coincidences we may treat as simply interesting; a number of coincidences we regard as remarkable; a vast accumulation of extraordinary coincidences we accept as conclusive proof. And when the case has reached this stage we look upon the matter as finally settled, until, as may happen, something of a most unusual character appears to upset all our reasoning. If nothing of this kind ever appears, whilst every newly discovered fact adds but confirmation to the conclusion, that conclusion is accepted as a permanently established truth.

Thus, the usual and predictable *modus operandi* of the Stratfordian apologist is to attack one discrete piece of evidence and then proceed to cast doubt on the entire fact pattern by innuendo. Anyone who reads Sturrock's book will soon realize that this approach is ideological nonsense. It may service the tourist industry at Stratford, but it does not advance the pursuit of truth about the Shakespearean question. By contrast, Sturrock's approach offers a more methodical, objective, and measurable account of Looney's statement that a "vast accumulation of extraordinary coincidences" can eventually be accepted as "conclusive proof."

Moreover, the lucky reader of Sturrock's book gets an invaluable review of various methodological or epistemological obstacles to clear thinking about the authorship question. They include: (1) looking for a single conclusive argument on either side; (2) relying on the authority of "experts" who may have failed to ask the right questions and had this failure reinforced through professorial "groupthink"; (3) assuming that casual inspections of the 1623 First Folio and the Stratford monument are sufficient grounds to remove any basis for rational doubt; (4) engaging in circular arguments, or "shoehorn arguments," often indicated by the frequent use of such weasel phrases as "may have," "could have," "probably did" or my personal favorite, "it is tempting, even logical, to guess," etc.; and (5) mixing up observational data and theory.

Sturrock covers all these points and many more within the first forty pages of his book; that alone makes the volume a good investment in critical thinking even if

a methodological leap of faith is involved in assigning numbers to such things as the probability that both the Earl of Oxford and the author of the sonnets seem to have been lame.

In chapter 8 ("scene 8") Sturrock applies Laplace's rule of succession to the data on literary paper trails for Elizabethan authors as presented in Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*. The "Rule of succession" holds that in examining a well-defined yes or no question that admits of a "yes" n times, we may calculate the odds of obtaining another yes ($N + 1$ th) time as

$$\frac{P = n+1}{N+2}$$

Price's data show raw probabilities for the existence of evidence pertaining to ten categories of literary biography for twenty-four of Shakespeare's contemporaries. She found, for example, that there is some evidence of formal education for seventeen of them, extant correspondence for fourteen, etc. Her data lends itself very well to a Bayesian use of the rule of succession principle. In the prior chapter on the problem of "conspiracy"—obviously a difficult and intrinsically ideological concept—the Degrees of Belief in the Oxford case went down for two of Sturrock's characters, Claudia and Beatrice. When confronted by Price's data using the rule of succession analysis, even Beatrice, the Stratfordian, is forced to reckon with the difficulties it poses for the Stratford incumbent. By the time the evidence of the chapter is analyzed, the Stratfordian and Oxfordian charts both show a growing divergence of Degrees of Belief unfavorable to the traditional view of authorship, with both Claudia and Beatrice favoring Oxford or Ignoto (an "unknown" author posited as a possible candidate) over Shakspeare by well over 10,000:1 odds. In the course of the book these odds vary as new issues are brought up and evaluated by the characters, but the Stratford man never recovers and in the end Oxford leaves Ignoto behind as well.

Sturrock's opening discussion of the question of the author's lameness is one with a long history in Shakespearean criticism. The chapter illustrates the merit of his Bayesian approach; contemporary internet "discussions" over the question of the author's alleged lameness frequently bog down in black and white absolutist positions with one side insisting that the sonnet references to lameness are "metaphorical" and the other insisting that they are also grounded in a literal, real-life experience of being lamed. Sturrock's method, at least in theory, allows authorship students to resolve this impasse by allowing them first to assign relative degrees of probability, based on their interpretation of evidence of the sonnets, to the proposition that the author was at some point in his life lame, and then to see how their differing evaluations affect the posterior probabilities of the three different authorship scenarios. Such differences in

degrees of probability affect things a lot less than the layman might think, as it turns out. Sturrock's resident Stratfordian Beatrice estimates the probability of the author's lameness at only 5:1 while the Oxfordian sympathizer Claudia estimates it at 50:1. Yet despite this discrepancy, Claudia ends up with .82 probability for Oxford and Beatrice also favors him, despite her initial doubts, by .70.

After working their way through chapters on education, geography (primarily interest in, and knowledge of, Italy), social status, handwriting, chronology of *The Tempest*, the Holy Trinity Monument, the 1623 First Folio, the testimony of Ben Jonson, and several chapters on the Sonnets, the odds given by both Claudia and Beatrice trump any reservations either may have to begin with. Beatrice ends with a DB (Degree of Belief) for the Stratford position of more than -128; Claudia puts the case against Stratford at DB -261. The corresponding scores for Oxford are, for Beatrice, 11 and for Claudia 53. Converted into probabilities, Claudia's DB puts the unlikelihood of Stratford at 8×10^{-27} and Beatrice at 10^{-13} . The corresponding probabilities for Oxford, if slightly less extraordinary, are nevertheless impressive for both; for Claudia 1.5×10^{-6} , and Beatrice 0.92.

Among the chapters that produce stronger scores for the incumbent and weaker ones for Oxford is one on *The Tempest*, which was written without awareness of the 2013 book by myself and Lynne Kositsky. It effectively interrogates Bill Bryson's silly faith in the 1611 *Tempest* "silver bullet" argument, but even Claudia had not yet been exposed at the time of writing to the compelling arguments against a 1611 composition date that we set forth.

Certainly one can imagine a character with a more rigid Stratfordian position than the one espoused by Beatrice, who is willing to categorically agree, for example, that the *Sonnets* seem to imply by some credible margin a lamed author, or that there is no reliable evidence attesting to Shakspeare's educational experience. Correspondingly, however, in discussing the prior probabilities of a "compact"—a term Sturrock's characters agree is less emotionally prejudicial than "conspiracy"—to protect a concealed author, Beatrice puts the likelihood at only 1 in 100, and even the Oxford-leaning Claudia will give this idea only 1 in 10 prior odds. Many Oxfordians—those who, like Katherine Chiljan or Charlton Ogburn, Jr., see abundant evidence in the literary paper trails of the day of awareness of a concealed author—might put the odds much higher. Part of the elegance of Sturrock's book is that it leaves readers free to make such determinations for themselves and then use Bayesian methods to evaluate the corresponding posterior probabilities. To conclude, this is an enjoyable and highly educational approach to authorship studies, one that offers the opportunity to authorship skeptics and

Oxfordians to develop a common dialogue with Stratfordians using the common language of statistical analysis. Only time will tell whether such a dialogue can emerge. In the meantime, we should be grateful to Professor Sturrock for leading the way and giving us a roadmap. As Amazon reviewer D. Gilbert, whose review is voted the most useful by Amazon readers (where the book enjoys a 4/5 rating over twenty-three reviews), has noted, the methods used in Sturrock's book to weigh the authorship question can easily be modified and generalized to tackle other kinds of inquiry. To conclude, then in Gilbert's words: "I highly recommend this book to any blind men faced with an elephant, as well as those willing to entertain the specific question: who was Shakespeare?"

Roger Stritmatter Interviews Peter Sturrock

Roger Stritmatter: What first got you interested in the authorship question?

Peter Sturrock: I became interested in the authorship question in a very roundabout way. In my youth (age about twenty), I loved reading poetry and tried writing a little. When I came to writing my memoirs (*A Tale of Two Sciences*), I remembered that interest, and I wished to give an example of my early poetry. The only one that I could remember was a parody of Shakespeare's most famous sonnet: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" My parody began, inevitably, "Shall I compare thee to a winter's night?" That prompted me to reread the original sonnet, and I soon began to read them all in sequence. Of course, I began to wonder what they were all about. I remember that I tried to make a two-line precis of each sonnet. That went fairly well for the first seventeen, but not so well thereafter. I then began to wonder what other people had to say about the sonnets. And so I came to learn that there is an Authorship Question. After that, it was downhill all the way.

Stritmatter: What were your first steps in thinking through the problem? Why did you feel that, as a distinguished professor from a discipline alien to Shakespearean studies, you would have something to bring to the question?

Sturrock: Now I must digress. Fifty years ago, like many other people, I was shaken up by the JFK assassination. I instinctively (and sensibly and correctly) could not accept the official cover story, but I realized that it was a very complex problem. There were many questions to look into, none of which would by itself lead to a conclusive answer. I realized that this is also true of major scientific problems. This led me to start thinking about how one could better organize thinking about a complex scientific—or nonscientific—problem. I was fortunate that I had benefited from a wonderful series of lectures by Ed Jaynes (then a Research Professor at Stanford) on

Bayesian probability theory, so I knew that a Bayesian approach could be helpful.

At that time, pulsars had recently been discovered, and there was a lively debate as to whether they were white dwarfs or neutron stars. So I set myself the task of deciding how one could organize that particular problem. The result was that I invented what I now call the *Basin* procedure. This procedure uses *BAYeS* Theorem plus an *IN*terface that separates data from theory. I wrote an article on that topic and published it in the *Astrophysical Journal* (vol. 182, p. 169) in 1973. I always thought that it could and should be applied also to nonscientific problems. The assassination was an appropriate topic, but not a pleasant one. My wife was not happy with my spending time reading books about that unpleasant event. Hence, when I learned that there is a Shakespeare Authorship Question, I immediately realized that it could be a good subject for an application of the Basin procedure.

Stritmatter: Did you have any early interactions with orthodox colleagues that influenced your approach as you went about researching and writing the book?

Sturrock: Soon after I realized that there is an authorship question, I checked with the chair of the English department at a major university, inquiring whether any of the professors there had a particular interest in Shakespeare. He replied that the department had five distinguished Shakespeare scholars. I sent an e-mail or letter to each of them inquiring about his or her views on the authorship question. Not one of them even acknowledged my inquiry. At a later date, I became friendly with a local English professor, and began to share my doubts about the standard theory. The professor had no interest and once said, “You will never convince me that the Shakespeare works were not written by Shakespeare.” These interactions with orthodox scholars made it clear that the Authorship Question is not simply a scholarly issue—it is just as much (perhaps even more) a political issue. I realized some time ago that a heresy comprises a proposition that is both a challenge to understanding and a challenge to power. To question the Authorship is a heresy! Heretics have never been treated kindly by the relevant establishment.

Stritmatter: When and why did you first think of writing a book to address your concern?

Sturrock: I remember reading two book reviews by that remarkable scholar Henry Bauer in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* (vol. 18, p. 149 [2004]). He reviewed *Shakespeare’s Unorthodox Biography: New Evidence of an Authorship Problem*, by Diana Price, and *Alias Shakespeare: Solving the Greatest Literary Mystery of all Time*, by Joseph Sobran. Bauer’s opening words are worth rereading: “Orthodoxy at times seems quite impervious to evidence and logic.” These reviews caught

my attention, especially when I read about Price’s appendix that compares the “literary paper trails” of twenty-four contemporary authors with that of Shakspeare. It seemed to me that this dataset might be amenable to a statistical analysis. I did in fact carry out such an analysis (it was very simple to do), and published the results in the same journal in 2008 [*Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 22, 529].

A little later, I began to think about a book, and I drew up an outline in May, 2010. According to my records, I began writing in October, 2010. After expert editing by my long-term colleague and friend Kathleen Erickson, the text and graphics went to the very skillful designer, Michael Rohani, in October 2012. It appeared on Amazon in January, 2013.

Stritmatter: What were your goals in writing the book?

Sturrock: I guess I had several goals. One was to organize the analysis along the lines of the Basin procedure. Too much of the writing about the Authorship Question is loaded with words like *if*, *perhaps*, *presumably*, *no doubt*, etc. The Basin procedure replaces these weasel words with options that can be rated numerically. The resulting numbers can then be processed in such a way as to arrive at final probability estimates for whatever hypotheses one has decided to address. My choice was to consider three hypotheses: the author was either *Stratford* (the man from Stratford upon Avon), *Oxford* (Edward de Vere) or *Ignotus* (Somebody Else).

Another goal was to structure the book as a do-it-yourself kit. This meant that I had to have a website into which readers could enter their personal judgments, and a program on the website that would process their entries and return to each reader his or her final result. I was fortunate to be able to persuade my friend Adam Curry to design and run the website.

I wanted the book to be readable—hopefully pleasurable so. I also wanted to be free to present both sides of the argument, and this suggested a dialog format, which Galileo used so successfully (too successfully for his own good). However, I opted for a more informal version, more like scenes in a play, with a variety of settings in Northern California—especially the wine countries of Carmel Valley and Napa Valley.

Stritmatter: Have you had any interactions since writing it with orthodox professors, either at Stanford or elsewhere?

Sturrock: Unfortunately not. It seems that, for orthodox scholars, the Authorship Question is not something to be discussed in polite company. And I do try to be polite.



Save the Date!

The First Annual *Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship* Authorship Conference will be held in Madison, Wisconsin, from Thursday, September 11, through Sunday, September 14, 2014.

Stay current with the latest in research, publications, debate, film, and performance from the Shakespeare authorship movement, domestically and abroad.

Highlights include a Thursday evening conference kick-off concert by *Rasputina*, a unique cello-based ensemble that explores historical music. The performance will include pieces from their current project *Fa La La—the Bastardy of Shakespeare's Madrigals*, the reinterpreted songs of Renaissance composer Thomas Weelkes. Musician/artist Melora Creager is currently creating this narrative piece (instrumental/song/spoken word) reimagining Weelkes' works, 1597-1601. <http://www.rasputina.com/falala/>

Saturday's program will include an optional excursion to the renowned American Players Theater in Spring Green, Wisconsin, an outdoor theater nestled in a beautiful forested setting, for a production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. <http://americanplayers.org/> Those attending will enjoy an Elizabethan inspired al fresco banquet prepared by local farm to table caterers *Enos Farms* on the grounds of the theatre. <http://www.enosfarms.com/>. Expect additional entertainment and a chance to meet with actors or staff from the APT.

Also planned will be a screening of the final version of *Nothing is Truer than Truth*, a film by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMVNSQfSUJA>

Watch for a full conference agenda for all the details, including the date and time of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Annual Meeting.

How much: \$175 for SOF members who register by July 15, 2014; \$200 after July 15. \$200 for non-members who register by July 15; \$225 after July 15.

Where: The conference will be hosted at the Overture Center, Madison's downtown home for arts and culture. <http://overturecenter.com/> The Overture Center is located in the heart of downtown, and on the popular State Street, a primarily pedestrian mall linking the Wisconsin State Capitol with the University of Wisconsin campus. It is Madison's premier shopping and dining district. Conference lodging will be provided by the Madison Concourse Hotel, located 2 blocks from the Overture Center. <http://concoursehotel->

px.trvlclick.com/hotel/ See below for rate and reservation information. Watch for additional lodging options to be listed in the near future.

Why: Watch for the agenda and list of fantastic speakers, artists and performers assembling in Madison to mark the Annual Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conference. Don't miss it!

Who: Could be you! See the *Call for Papers and Presentations* below.

How: The Madison Airport (MSN) is located about five miles from the Overture Center and the Madison Concourse Hotel. This airport is serviced by American Eagle, Delta, Frontier and United Airlines. Carpooling from Chicago (three hours) or Milwaukee (90 minutes) airports can be explored for direct flight options.

Madison Concourse Hotel lodging at the SOF

Conference rate: The special conference room rate is \$139/night for a single and \$149/night for a double (plus tax). Rooms may be booked by calling the hotel directly (800-356-8293) and mentioning the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. This room rate will be honored for three days before and three days after the dates of the Conference (depending on availability). This rate is good until August 15 or until all available rooms have been booked.

Proposals for conference papers and presentations now being accepted

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is dedicated to academic excellence, and guidelines for presentation of papers, or other presentation formats, for the annual conference are available from the members of the program committee.

To submit a proposal, contact:
Bonner Cutting: jandbcutting@comcast.net, John Hamill: hamillx@pacbell.net, or Earl Showerman: earlees@charter.net.

Deadline for submissions is **July 15, 2014**.

(SAS Conference, cont. from p. 1)

Much Ado About Nothing

A screening of Joss Whedon's low-budget, black-and-white version of Shakespeare's comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* led off the first evening. In Whedon's version, the milieu is shifted from Messina to Whedon's home in Southern California and is performed by an ensemble cast of Whedon regulars, including actors from the TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. A panel discussion followed, in which it was agreed that the play clearly demonstrates the importance of language in Shakespeare. Earl Showerman said that, in his view, the film captures the intimate meaning of Shakespeare's rich language which mirrors euphuistic principles. The panel also said that some aspects of the play, such as the lovers writing sonnets to each other, parallels *Love's Labors Lost*, suggesting that this may be the "lost" play, *Love's Labors Won*.

"Shakespeare Crackpot": A New Theatrical Monologue

Montreal-based actor and writer Keir Cutler led off the second day with a reading of his new monologue, "Shakespeare Crackpot," which will premiere at the 2014 Montreal Fringe Festival in June. Cutler, who has been a Shakespeare doubter since 2002, discusses in his new work the odd beginning of the Stratford myth. Looking for the historical William Shakespeare in Stratford proved to be an impossible task since, by the time researchers arrived, "everyone was dead and no one had thought to protect anything of artistic merit." So an old mulberry tree behind Shakespeare's former home was selected as "the last memorial of immortal Shakespeare." Citizens of Stratford directed visitors to the tree, saying it was hand-planted by the Bard.

Eventually the tree's owner had had enough of tourists overrunning his property and chopped it down, causing a riot in the little town. It was purchased by a carpenter who started carving Shakespeare relics to sell out of his store which he renamed The Mulberry Shop. According to Cutler, this was the start of "Shakespeare becoming divine."

Cutler began researching the Shakespeare authorship question in an attempt to mock the doubters, but he discovered to his surprise that the man from Stratford had no paper trail, no surviving plays or poems, no letters and no writing in his own hand. Cutler was struck by the realization that during all his years of education (including studying for a PhD), he had never learned this. No institution of higher learning provided any perspective of the authorship problem.

As Cutler put it, though all universities claim they are dedicated to critical thinking, they refuse to consider the authorship question as a serious subject. According to them, there is no argument and the issue is settled. Cutler feels all students should learn that Shakespeare is the only



alleged author who left behind no contemporaneous evidence of his career as a professional writer.

Conditional Probability

Sam C. Saunders, professor emeritus of mathematics at Washington State University, spoke on "The Philosophy of Conditional Probability in the Shakespeare Authorship Question Unfolded." He said that any hypothesis about the Shakespeare authorship question is initially an opinion that is later supported or unsupported by perceived evidence. Such evidence is necessarily formulated as a conditional probability, for example, "How likely is it that Will Shaksper could write a play containing exact geographical details of Venice and specifics of Venetian law given that he neither visited Italy nor attended law school?"

This can be expressed as the conditional probability of an event B given the knowledge that an event A has already occurred. Saunders reviewed the elements of hypothesis testing and the manipulation of probability measures, suggesting that such formalism should matter to those wishing to convince academia, as well as the general public, of the validity of the Oxfordian hypothesis. Saunders stressed that opinions are not probabilities, and cannot be used as evidence. In the Shakespeare authorship question, he said, there has often been no distinguishing between probability and opinion, an occurrence which can cause error as well as confusion.

Saunders discussed the application of both hypothesis testing and the science of attribution known as Stylometrics, citing the study by Elliott and Valenza to determine the author of the works attributed to William Shakespeare. According to their study, Edward de Vere could not have been the writer of the Shakespeare canon, based on their comparison to a single youthful de Vere poem. They found a vast stylistic difference, but their method was similar to using the doggerel on the Shakespeare monument in comparison with the Sonnets as a basis for concluding Shaksper was not the author.

A Critique of Oxfordian Cryptographic Analysis

Michael Morse offered “A Critique of Oxfordian Cryptographic Analysis: Falsifiability, the Non-Exclusivity Problem, and the Seductive Allure of Fictive Ontologies.” Morse advocated a robust skepticism when assessing claims for authorship based on the alleged onomastic encipherment of identity or authorially ascriptive details within a particular text. Focusing on the dedication to *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609), Morse examined the recent methods for deciphering this text put forward by various Oxfordians, including Dr. Peter Sturrock, Jonathan Bond, David Roper, Robert Prechter, Jr., and Dr. Helen Gordon. In each case, the methods employed are terminally flawed, in Morse’s view, yielding multiple, wildly variant “solutions.”

Robert Prechter’s article in *Shakespeare Matters*, Spring/Summer 2005, purported to discover a litany of proper names in the *Sonnets* dedication. Morse noted that Prechter’s “solution” is in essence a very lax form of acrostic. It purports to confer validity on topical, onomastic acrostics that flow—sequentially and unidirectionally, but without any requirement of equidistant or patterned spacing—over a single iteration of the full dedication text. However, the absence of equidistant or patterned spacing in the selection of letters opens the linguistic floodgate and ruins any legitimate claims for the puzzle’s exclusivity. The topicality of the “found” nexus of names seems to lend authenticity and intentionality to the “puzzle,” but the existence of any number of alternate topicality-nexuses can be discerned in the dedication using Prechter’s methodology. For example, Morse demonstrated how a nexus of proper names, places and characters all related to Winnie the Pooh could be found within the dedication’s text.

Morse examined the cryptographic findings of Dr. Helen Gordon. Using a contorted acrostic method, Gordon finds the following names in the dedication: “Elisabeth Regina,” “Henry Wriothesley,” “E. de Vere,” “Twelfth Night,” as well as the mottos of Elizabeth, Oxford and Wriothesley. Morse observed that Gordon’s method—loosely inspired by Prechter’s—is even less rigorous. In fact, her rules are so lax that her methodology devolves into little more than an invitation to unscramble anagrammatically all of the letters of the dedication at will.

Morse then examined the claims made for the *Sonnets* dedication by Dr. Peter Sturrock, Jonathan Bond and David Roper (Sturrock’s findings rely heavily on the theories of Bond and Roper). Morse concluded that these claims are largely specious except for their common subscription to John Rollett’s discovery of the trifurcated appearance of “WR-IOTH-ESLEY” (discernible in an 18x8 layout of the dedication). However, Morse suggests that this “layout” was almost certainly not contemplated by the author.

Morse also offered a tentative challenge to Alexander Waugh’s recent claims for the purported “courte-deare-

verse” anagram (with its proximity to the marginal reference to “Shak-speare”) in William Covell’s *Polimanteia* (1595). Waugh’s argument relies on six assertions that Waugh deems “indisputable.” Morse submitted that Waugh’s fifth assertion—that “courte-deare-verse” is a “unique contrivance”—is simply not the case. Moreover, Covell himself frequently employed hyper-hyphenated adjectival descriptions that Waugh found to be so suggestive of a hidden anagram. Morse discussed other considerations that work against Waugh’s claims, including the purported anagram itself, “Our de Vere—a Secret.” Unfortunately, said Morse, the anagrammatized text lends itself to a host of other anagrams, each as plausibly valid as Waugh’s.

Wardship in Early Modern England and its Impact on Edward de Vere

Author and independent researcher Bonner Miller Cutting continued with a paper titled “Evermore in Subjection: Wardship in Early Modern England and its Impact on Edward de Vere.” According to Cutting, wardship began in the 11th century when the King gave large grants of land for military service known as “knight service” and controlled a child’s upbringing if his nobleman father died. Though wardship ended in 1646, William and Robert Cecil were masters of the court of wards for fifty years, retaining control over the lives of other families. It is estimated that they provided over 3,000 young people to wealthy landowners.

The master of the wards accepted petitions from “suitors” who wished to become the child’s guardian. Even relatives could buy back their own child, leading to



a complex system of payoffs, many under the table. For the Queen it was a good source of income. Wardship carried with it legal custody of the child, the right to determine the child’s marriage, and the right to collect income from the child’s land. It has been described as a “squalid system of cold-blooded profiteering off the misfortunes of others.” According to Cutting, the Cecils profited immensely from their position as master of the court of wards and that power and family wealth has endured over the centuries. Biographer Mary Lovell asserted, however, that William Cecil’s profiteering was “perfectly legitimate,” and that the wardship system benefited from his “benign and efficient influence.”

Cutting then discussed the effect of wardship on Edward de Vere, one of eight wards that William Cecil retained for himself. Edward moved to the opulent home of Cecil when he was twelve years old, where he received a first class education. His property, however, was heavily encumbered and the Queen allowed the Earl of Leicester to appropriate the Oxford lands. Cutting stated that Oxford would never have been able to pay off his debts even if he wasn't a spendthrift. While Cecil ignored Oxford's debts during his marriage to his daughter Anne, after Anne's untimely death he confiscated the remainder of Oxford's property to pay off those debts, which left Oxford financially devastated. Adding insult to injury, Cecil even took custody of Oxford's three daughters.

Cutting maintained that Oxford's wish to tell his side of the story led to his creating the plays and poems that transformed him into a major literary power. She stated that the life of Oxford has been "scrubbed" from history and that his wardship is a big piece of the puzzle. It resulted in an unwieldy cover story that is "a hodge-podge of myths, speculation, and assumptions." Cutting concluded by revealing that the creation of the memorial to Oxford in Westminster Abbey in 1741 was supervised by Richard Boyle, the Earl of Burlington, a direct descendant of Robert Cecil.

'This Old House': English Merchants in Moscow

Professor Rima Greenhill, PhD, Senior Lecturer in the Russian Language at Stanford University, continued her informative series of lectures about English-Russian relations and their relevance to the authorship question. On a trip to Moscow she came across a white stone house near St. Basil's Cathedral and knew it immediately, recognizing it as the old house of the Muscovy Company, one of the first civilian stone buildings and the second most important building in Moscow. It was the house that Russian Czar Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) granted to English merchants to conduct diplomatic and trade relations with Russia. It was the first official residence of a Western power in the Russian capital.

With the support of Queen Elizabeth and William Cecil, England and Russia developed a new market for English cloth and, as Greenhill argued, England can be said to have brought capitalism to Russia. The house, which came to be known as the Old English Court, played host to numerous dignitaries, merchants, and English envoys sent by Queen Elizabeth I. It was also, according to Greenhill, a source of information for William Shakespeare's *Love's Labors Lost*, a play that reflects the growing distrust and worsening relationship between England and Russia.

Czar Ivan, however, used England to develop his military capability with modern military tools. Replacing bows and arrows, Ivan used cannons and gunpowder imported from England to conquer the Tartars, an event that caused Germany to embargo the sale of weapons to Moscow. Eventually, Muscovy House became an



international trade center and a house of political intrigue, a sanctuary for anyone trying to escape from Ivan which, according to Greenhill, resulted in the secrecy and midnight visits that appear in *Love's Labors Lost*.

Secrets of the Droeshout Portrait

Discussing the Droeshout portrait, William J. Ray showed that it is constructed on a pattern of geometric angles and line lengths that together form a unique five-pointed star, the Vere mullet, which has all 40-degree points, and describe four background circles conveying the idea "4-O." Those two characters are transparent puns on the surname Vere, as "vier" is four in German and a circle resembles the O in Oxford.

The portrait is no more than a caricature that rests on the geometric identification message while managing to look halfway (but only halfway) human. There are no "Golden Mean" ratios in the face at all, though the human face has more than thirty. It is a comic demonstration that people will believe anything if told to by respected figures. The crux of Ray's argument was that the First Folio portrait, so vital to Stratfordians, unequivocally repels the viewer with its surface impression of an oaf who is nevertheless some kind of genius.

The most striking identifying devices on the surface are the two small embroidered spear points on the left of the collar and four longer spear points on the right. The puzzle is solved when we vocalize the comparative number of spears in French, then German: "deux-vier," matching the surname de Vere. There is also a block O on the right collar with a strange E above it. This can be construed as an EO insignia, except that there is no oval in the center of the O character. Instead, the point where it should be centers a circle that touches exactly four circular shapes on the face and tunic, "four" meaning "vier" or Vere, and O indicating Oxford.

By similar tricks, some forty-two devices were implanted into the portrait. Perhaps the number was 42 because it is the reverse of deux-vier/de Vere. In short, the primary evidence for the Stratfordian paradigm, the Droeshout Portrait, turns out to be an elaborate naming system for the true author. [Ray's full presentation is at [wjray.net: http://www.wjray.net/shakespeare_papers/droeshout_portrait.htm](http://www.wjray.net/shakespeare_papers/droeshout_portrait.htm)]

Who Won the Tennis Court Quarrel?

Researcher and journalist Gerit Quealy spoke on the subject "Who Ultimately Won the Tennis Court Quarrel? Timeline of the Sidney-Oxford Poet War." According to her, the tennis court quarrel between Oxford and Sidney was about the French Marriage Crisis, yet their rivalry probably predated the incident. The two may have met at Gray's Inn in as early as 1568 and both were involved in Burghley's marriage negotiations for his daughter, which culminated in de Vere's marriage to Anne Cecil in 1571. The quarrel, however, reached a pinnacle in their infamous tennis court dispute, where Philip Sidney was humiliated by Edward de Vere in front of foreign dignitaries by Oxford, who called him a "puppy."

Quealy suggested, however, that Sidney and Oxford were always rivals, although writers such as Joseph Sobran wrote that "there is no evidence of lasting rancor," and Eva Turner Clark said that their friendship was deep because of their similarities. Nonetheless, their "war" is reflected in Shakespeare's plays and poems: Polonius's line in *Hamlet* regarding "young men falling out at tennis" references their quarrel. Quealy also pointed out that Sidney is lampooned in *Henry V*, which therefore had to be written before Sidney's death in 1586. *Love's Labors Lost* also lampoons Sidney's play the *Lady of May*, and in *Twelfth Night*, the character of Sir Andrew Aguecheek represents Sidney, a play that also references the French Marriage Crisis.

Sidney is further lampooned in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *1 and 2 Henry IV*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline*, *Much Ado about Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the plays, Oxford wrote about contemporary matters and not only is Sidney himself satirized, but also the Sidney faction that included Gabriel Harvey, Henry Lee, Edward Dyer and Christopher Hatton. This is evident, she said, in a back-and-forth timeline in which the publications of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* coincide with the introduction of the pseudonym "William Shakespeare."

Venus and Adonis excoriates Sidney and is filled with horse imagery, one of Sidney's obsessions, and Adonis being less interested in love than in chasing the boar and ultimately being killed by the boar. *The Rape of Lucrece* is a response to Sidney's attack on Oxford in *The Arcadia*, *Astrophil & Stella* and the *Defence of Poesy*. Quealy asserted that William Shakspeare would have had no reason to lampoon Sidney, but Edward de Vere hated him; she declared that Sidney and his best friend Fulke

Greville are "the whole reason for suppression of the name." Likewise, the unattributed poem *Wilobie His Avis* is in reality an attack on Shakespeare (Oxford) by the Sidney faction.

The "poet war" stopped for a while after Sidney's death in 1586 and subsequent funeral, which made him into a national hero. According to Quealy, however, the Sidney and Oxford factions took it up again in publications in 1590 and continued it through the publication of the First Folio of 1623. Indeed, the struggle for supremacy was a victory for the Sidney faction in suppressing forever the name of Edward de Vere. The First Folio was published by those who hated Oxford and invented Shakespeare (with his St. George's Day birthday) as a patriotic reminder of the exemplary Elizabethan Golden Age, and to whom James I owed his kingship.

Small Latin and Less Greek: Anatomy of a Misquotation

Roger Stritmatter, PhD, Associate Professor of Humanities and Literary Studies at Coppin State University in Baltimore, spoke on "Small Latin and Less Greek: Anatomy of a Misquotation." He addressed the



widespread failure to understand the significance of the following Jonson lines from the 1623 First Folio of William Shakespeare:

*"And though thou hadst small Latine and less Greeke
From thence to honour thee I would not seeke
For names, but call forth thund'ring Aeschilus..."*

The lines are generally taken to mean that Jonson is invidiously comparing Shakespeare's knowledge of classical languages to his own, a conclusion made possible by the lack of a paper trail connecting Shakespeare to any source of advanced education. In fact, upon closer examination, Jonson's words do not declare that Shakespeare "had small Latin and less Greek" but rather posit that *even if he had had* "small Latin and less Greek," Jonson would still rank him among the greats of classical literature.

Stritmatter suggested the First Folio has been abstracted from its political context, specifically its close

connection with the political crisis then unfolding over King James's proposed marriage of Prince Charles to Anna of Spain, a situation that brought the nation to the verge of rebellion. This context is vital to understanding the implications of Jonson's double-edged words. The prospect of the Spanish marriage was viewed with alarm by the "patriot faction" led by the two Folio patrons, the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery (married to Susan Vere) and the 4th Earl of Southampton and 18th Earl of Oxford, the latter of whom was imprisoned from April 1622 to October 1623, the months during which the First Folio was printed. Accounts of the publication never mention the Spanish crisis and vice versa.

Stritmatter cited author Peter Dickson, who maintains that it is impossible to believe that the First Folio was not a major political statement which redefined England's national identity, and Prof. Michael Dobson (University of Birmingham), who asserted that the transformation of Shakespeare into a national icon began with the First Folio.

Shrovetide in *The Tempest*

Award winning Canadian poet and author Lynne Kositsky spoke on the labyrinth as a symbol of Shrovetide in her talk titled "Shrovetide in *The Tempest*." As she explained, the maze constitutes the primary technology of Prospero's magic, and its figure, as a symbolic structure, informs the entirety of the play, explaining many curious features of plot and language. According to *Tempest* critics Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden Vaughan, "the first four acts conclude with an invitation to move on: 'Come, follow'; 'Lead the way'; 'follow, I pray you'; 'follow me and do me service.'"

The characters move in small groups from one part of the island to another; only at Prospero's final invitation, "Please you, draw near," do they join in one place. Although their physical and psychological journeys through the island's maze have ended, the play concludes with plans for a sea journey back to Milan. Within the court party the maze references are more obvious. By the third act, the wearied Gonzalo announces:

*"By'r lakin, I can go no further, sir;
My old bones ache: here's a maze trod, indeed,
Through furth-rights and meanders!"*

These terms apparently refer to the straight (forthrights) and curved (meanders) elements of the traditional church or cathedral labyrinth. Kositsky then discussed a diagram of the labyrinth in historic Chartres Cathedral. She pointed out the symbolism of its features, including the labrys, quadrants, lunations, and central rosette.

The labyrinth was called "le chemin de Jerusalem" or "chemin de paradis" because in the days before Easter Christians were supposed to travel to the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem to walk in Jesus's footsteps on the way to his

crucifixion. Those who could not go to the Holy Land were encouraged to walk the labyrinth instead. There are stories recounting that the penitents had to move forward on their knees. At each bend or labyr along the route, meditation was encouraged, and indulgences could be bought for a few coins to absolve penitents' sins.

There were also supposed relics of saints: "pigges bones," as Chaucer called them. The ritual of walking the labyrinth died out for the most part in the 16th century, but there's been a modern resurgence of it in churches and churchyards from Shrove Tuesday through Lent and Easter, usually featuring turf mazes or labyrinths drawn in chalk, just as in *The Tempest*, which talks of "chalk[ing] forth the way."

In his book *Great Oxford*, Richard Malim suggested that *The Tragedy of the Spanish Maze*, played on Shrove Monday 1605 before the court, was an earlier title for *The Tempest*. Kositsky and Roger Stritmatter investigated that idea (See chapter 5 of their book, *On the Date, Sources, and Design of Shakespeare's The Tempest*) and researched further, learning regarding the pranks and boisterous transgressions of law that occurred at Shrovetide and Carnival, as well as the importance of the maze or labyrinth during the Easter period. They came to the conclusion that Malim was correct, and that *The Tempest* is indeed a Shrovetide play.

Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being

In 1971, while compiling an anthology of poetry from Shakespeare's works, the late English Poet Laureate Ted Hughes discovered a broad recurring pattern throughout the "mature" plays. For over twenty years he pondered his discovery and, in 1992, toward the end of his creative life, published a strange enigmatic study entitled *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*. That book was the subject of the paper delivered by Mark Mendizza, vice president of the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable.

Mendizza stated that the book is not just another piece of literary criticism, but describes a mythical framework that had thoroughly captured the imagination of the author and formed what Hughes called a "Shakespeare Myth" and later a "Tragic Equation." He argued that the myth was a generative force behind every Shakespeare play from *All's Well That Ends Well* to *The Winter's Tale*. Indeed, he argued that the "mature" plays are best understood not as separate dramas, but as a single, integrated, and ritualistic work that reflected this mytho-poetic force.

This force, according to Hughes, was derived from ancient mythological representations of the mother goddess and, in Shakespeare's case, her abandonment. Mendizza traced the tragic equation from the two poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, to the plays *As You Like it*, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and finally to the redemption and



transcendence of *The Tempest*, which Hughes considered Shakespeare's final play.

Mendizza concluded his talk by stating that, while Hughes's book does not address the authorship issue directly and looks at the plays according to Stratfordian chronology, it is obvious that the writer had to have been initiated in the mysteries of Hermetic doctrine and asked whether a guy from Stratford could have "picked all of this up at the Mermaid Tavern."

Chaucer Hidden in Shakespeare's History Plays

Clinical Associate Professor of English at Washington State University Michael Delahoyde, PhD, then looked at "Chaucer Hidden in Shakespeare's History Plays."

Delahoyde stressed the importance of Chaucer's poetic influence on Shakespeare, noting that Edward de Vere is known to have owned a copy of Chaucer, purchased in 1570 along with his Geneva Bible. He stated that the influence of the so-called "father of English poetry" to Shakespeare's works has been astoundingly underestimated and that Chaucer is invoked subtly throughout the Shakespearean canon.

Chaucer's influence on Shakespeare is most overt in *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which are based on Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and "The Knight's Tale" from *The Canterbury Tales*; but Chaucer's influence is also present in many other places. Delahoyde cited parallels between Chaucer and Shakespeare, including influences from Chaucer's minor poems *House of Fame*, *Parliament of Fowles*, *Book of the Duchess*, and *The Legend of Good Women*. Examples from the plays include the apothecary scene in *Romeo and Juliet*; Hamlet's famous line, "I am but mad north-northwest," which references Chaucer's line from *Parliament of Fowles*, "As wisly as I saw thee north-north-west"; the line from *Macbeth*, "What's done cannot be undone," compared with Chaucer's line from *House of Fame*: "But that is doon, nis not to done." The first eighteen lines of *The Canterbury Tales* are strikingly echoed in *Richard II*, especially in connection with John of Gaunt, Chaucer's

patron and brother-in-law. Delahoyde believes that we should expect to find a reference to Chaucer here; Richard II was King during Chaucer's time, and Shakespeare infuses this play with Chaucer's spirit and his shadow.

Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*, honors the spirit of Chaucer just when the poet's world was being dismantled by the new regime. Offering a witty and sardonic view of life, Falstaff significantly recalls Chaucer himself, directly referencing poems such as the *Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse* and *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, among others.

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare's Aristophanic Comedy

Earl Showerman, MD, in his talk, "A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare's Aristophanic Comedy," explored the influence of Aristophanes' play *The Birds* on the structure, plot, motifs, allusions, and burlesque political allegory in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Showerman maintains that *The Birds* is a direct source for Shakespeare's *Dream* and that Oxford knew the comedies of Aristophanes through his tutor, Sir Thomas Smith. For further details of Showerman's talk, see *Shakespeare Matters*, Vol. 12, No. 4, Fall 2013, p. 19. <http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/SM12.4.pdf>

Pseudepigraphy and Forgery in Early Christianity

In the fourth century AD, an unknown author forged a collection of letters that claimed to be correspondence between the apostle Paul and the Roman philosopher and dramatist Seneca. In his talk, Michael Thomas, Professor of Humanities and Theology at Concordia University, addressed "Pseudepigraphy and Forgery in Early Christianity: An Examination of the Correspondence between Seneca and St. Paul." Pseudepigraphy is the false attribution of names of authors to works, and is certainly relevant to the authorship question.

The letters in question were originally produced by a Christian author who desired to show that Paul had been well-known as a philosopher and moralist in the first century. In fact, it was claimed that Seneca had read Paul's letters approvingly and had even shown them to the Emperor Nero. Thomas listed the reasons why the production of texts released under false names was common in early Christianity: the ethical impropriety of claiming *sui generis* knowledge when one learned from a master; a school or discipline that writes in the master's name; an incorrect attribution; new ideas in the mouth of exemplars; rhetorical training; and intentional forgeries.

Thomas pointed out that, of the fourteen works in the New Testament attributed to Paul, only seven are authentic. Other epistles ascribed to Paul, such as Ephesians, Timothy 1 and 2, and Titus are pseudepigraphic. Thomas mentioned the following as tests of authenticity: logic and themes, syntax and grammar, vocabulary, theological consistency, and the existence of possible anachronisms.

The parallels between Paul and Seneca which allowed them to be accepted as authentic included shared Stoic ideals, e.g., the moral virtue of following an exemplar, habits of the characters, attainment of virtue, worship of God and intimate knowledge of divine virtue, and the context and origins of the work.

However, Thomas pointed out that the letters between Paul and Seneca are not philosophical, but were mostly congratulatory; for example, a letter to Paul: "We read your letters and we loved them," and a letter from Paul to Seneca: "You are speaking the truth." The letters are known forgeries. Reasons for their inauthenticity include their stylistic inconsistency, the unlikelihood of a relationship between the two, and chronological inconsistencies. Moreover, Paul was known to be weak in Latin but fluent in Greek, and Seneca knew Greek, yet the correspondence is in Latin. Authentic correspondence between them surely would have been in Greek.

In the context of the Shakespeare authorship question, Thomas offered a plausible connection between the resurgence of Seneca's tragedies in the Middle Ages, when they were spread into England and Italy through the University of Paris and contributed to the English Renaissance. It is generally agreed that the author of *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* was influenced by themes found in Senecan tragedies.

Nothing Truer Than Truth

Director Cheryl Eagan-Donovan introduced a preview screening of her film, *Nothing is Truer than Truth*, based on Mark Anderson's book *Shakespeare by Another Name*. The film is still in post-production, with new opening and closing sections as well as the final narration, graphics, and an original score by composer Melora Creager to be added. Shot at locations visited by de Vere during his trip to Italy in 1575-76 as well as in Castle Hedingham in Essex England, *Nothing Truer than*

Truth focuses on the sixteen-month period when de Vere traveled the Continent using Venice as a base; the film complements the recent book by Richard Paul Roe, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*.

The film also looks at other aspects of Oxford's life such as his education, marriage, and finances, and describes incidents in his life which are reflected in his plays and poems, such as his parody of William Cecil in *Hamlet*. Eagan-Donovan uses graphic animation, travel footage, extant portraits, filmed performances of the plays, and interviews with renowned Shakespeare academics and artists. Among those interviewed are Sir Derek Jacobi, Tony award winner and former Globe Theatre director Mark Rylance, Paul Nicholson, Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Richard Paul Roe, Michael Cecil, 18th Baron Burghley and descendant of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, American Repertory Theatre artistic director Diane Paulus, and Tina Packer, founder and artistic director of Shakespeare & Company.

Also interviewed are Dr. Richard Waugaman, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Georgetown University School of Medicine, and Prof. Roger Stritmatter. According to Eagan-Donovan, the bisexuality premise portrayed in the film supports the view of Shakespeare as a complex person who struggled with issues of identity, but also as someone who possessed the ability to sublimate his own "self" and create multi-dimensional, truly human characters. She contends that the author's bisexuality also offers an explanation for the use of a pseudonym during the author's life and after his death, and for the continued refusal of academia to accept de Vere as Shakespeare.

For more information about the film and how to make a contribution, go to <http://fiscal.ifp.org/project.cfm/169/Nothing-is-Truer-than-Truth>

The Use of State Power to Hide de Vere's Authorship

James Warren, winner of the *Vero Nihil Verius* Award at the 2013 SARC conference for his work as the editor of *An Index of Oxfordian Publications*, talked about "The Use of State Power in the Effort to Hide Edward de Vere's Authorship of the Works Attributed to 'William Shakespeare.'" Warren cited reasons for concluding that the effort to hide de Vere's authorship during and after his lifetime was so extensive that it could have been effected only through the use of state power. Drawing on the work of Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, he noted that many documents that would support de Vere's authorship are no longer in existence.

Warren argued that those documents did not disappear by accident and that Oxford himself could not have destroyed all of them. Only two choices are possible: Edward de Vere was not the author, or state power was used to conceal his authorship. Warren then provided three reasons in support of the latter option. The first was Oxford's use of his plays to support Elizabeth's reign. Oxford incorporated themes from government-drafted homilies into more than twenty plays and used



them to increase public support for Elizabeth's regime during the critical years of the Anglo-Spanish War. It was at that time that he began receiving an annuity of 1,000 pounds per year and became an important, though secret, member of the government.

The second reason was that the plays were political and addressed contemporary events and people from the court and government in almost every act and scene and could not be censored in the usual sense by removing a scene here or a speech there. In order to break the connection between the plays and the court, the plays had to be separated from the author, and state power was used to ensure that it happened.

Finally, state power was used not merely to separate Oxford from the plays, but to erase him from the historical record. Those in charge of the state concluded that this extreme step was necessary because the plays were inextricably tied to the issue of succession; they had to take steps to avoid public recognition that the plays were addressing that issue, by far the most sensitive issue facing the kingdom after 1593, the year Queen Elizabeth turned sixty and still had not named a successor.

Warren also suggested that there must have been an even deeper reason eradicating Oxford from the record, citing the belief by some Oxfordians that de Vere was tied directly to the succession as either the son of the queen, or the father of a child by her, or both. Warren asked that Oxfordians keep an open mind about the so-called Prince Tudor theories because "there is no other theory on the horizon that is weighty enough to explain why those who controlled state power saw fit to use that power to conduct the systematic, sustained and determined effort

that was needed to eliminate Oxford from the historical record."

Sisyphus and the Globe: Turning (on) the Media

Don Rubin, professor and former chair of the Department of Theatre at York University in Toronto, spoke on the subject, "Sisyphus and the Globe: Turning (on) the Media." His talk explored the hardships facing anyone expecting positive media interest in the Shakespeare Authorship question. His primary position was that there was an important ongoing battle also being fought against the media on the authorship question. He said that no one should be surprised to realize that most of those in journalism were trained in traditional English Departments. That is to say, it is also a battle being fought against people whose minds are closed by virtue of no information or negative information on the issue.

Sharing his recent experience battling in print during the 2013 Joint SOS/SF Conference in Toronto with the youthful theater critic of Toronto's *Globe and Mail* (who had evidently decided that the authorship issue would be an easy target), Rubin asserted that his attempts to get positive reportage failed by most normal measures, though they did generate huge coverage for the authorship issue in general. The coverage produced a series of letters to the editor, many of which were favorable to the issue. Ultimately, said Rubin, authorship doubters need to develop an active and ongoing approach to the media which will build support every time there is a conference or public event. To do this effectively, he suggested that it might be necessary at some point to hire a professional public relations person for that purpose.

In this struggle, he said, “we are Sisyphus climbing the mountain.” He supported the recent merger of the two Oxfordian groups and asked if “we can all join together finally at least as doubters.”

Turning to the course in authorship studies he has taught at York, Rubin remarked that it is important for the instructor not to take a position toward one candidate or another, but to let students discover the facts themselves and do their own research. His class this past year looked closely at both recently published “Doubt” books (Wells & Edmondson’s *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* and Shahan & Waugh’s *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*) as well as at the Hope and Holston history of the subject, *The Shakespeare Controversy*.

They also spent time on the First Folio, reading *Venus and Adonis* and seeing several videos. The centerpiece of the course was attending the Joint Conference. In lieu of a final exam, the students (in small groups) had to conduct an open debate in front of the class arguing for one of the authorship candidates. For the record, in a final straw vote, Oxford’s candidacy had the most support, though the idea that the works could have been authored by a group finished a strong second. Needless to say, the candidacy of William of Stratford finished near the bottom of the pack.

Folger Conference Panel

The final session was a panel discussion led by Roger Stritmatter and James Warren concerning the previous weekend’s conference at the Folger Shakespeare Library on “Shakespeare and the Problem of Biography” (see separate article, p. 10). With that, the 18th annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference adjourned.



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