Six Characters in Search of an Author

by Ramon Jiménez

(This is a shortened version of a paper presented at the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, in September 2014)

Of the nearly 900 named characters that Shakespeare left us in his plays, 500 or so are historical, and the rest fictional. Of those fictional characters, several dozen hold a place in our minds as distinctively Shakespearean. Six of them, three major and three minor, have something unusual and surprising in common. What they share reveals an important fact about the author of the Shakespeare canon. These six characters are instantly recognized as Shakespearean:

- Sir John Falstaff
- Edward Poins
- Mistress Quickly
- Petruchio
- Christopher Sly
- The Bastard Philip Faulconbridge

There's no mistaking their author. They are rightfully called "quintessential" Shakespearean characters. But they have something else in common. Orthodox scholars acknowledge that each of them, or their literary ancestors, originated in one of three earlier plays by another, anonymous playwright. But there is no agreement on the identity of those playwrights.
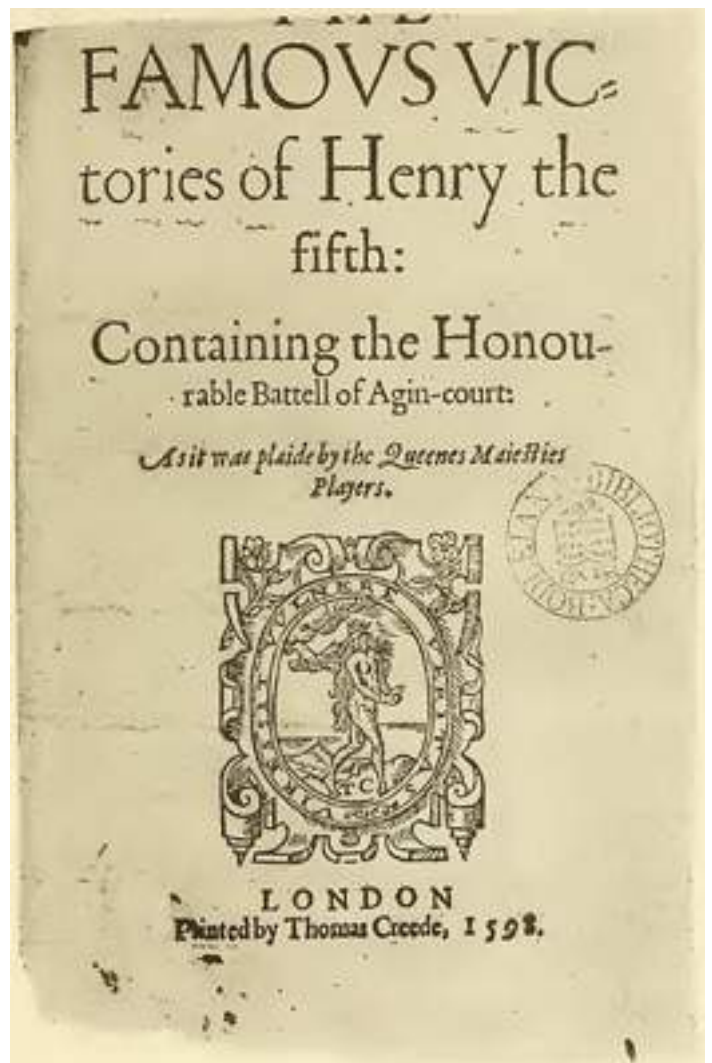
Each of these anonymous plays was published and performed in the 1590s or earlier. I've published a paper on each of them, demonstrating that it was written by the author of the Shakespeare canon, his first version of each particular story, and transformed, years later, into a canonical play—*Famous Victories* into three plays:

(1) The anonymous *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (first performed before 1588; first printed 1598) was transformed into Shakespeare's (a) *Henry IV, Part 1* (1598); (b) *Henry IV, Part 2* (1600); and (c) *Henry V* (1600).

(2) The anonymous *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* (first printed 1591) was transformed into Shakespeare's *King John* (1623).

(3) The anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* (first printed 1594) was transformed into Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1623).

Falstaff, Poins and Mistress Quickly are the literary descendants of nearly identical characters in the anonymous *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. Petruchio and Christopher Sly first appeared in the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew*. The Bastard Faulconbridge in *King John* is an improved version of the character of the same name in *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*. The reappearance in the canon of these six characters, or their literary descendants, is further proof that Shakespeare was the author of the earlier anonymous plays.

THE FAMOVS VICtories of Henry the fifth: Containing the Honourable Battell of Agin-court: As it was plaide by the Queenes Maiesties Players. LONDON Printed by Thomas Creede, 1598.

From the President:
Nous Sommes Charlie

Dear Members,

Many of you may have read the *Newsweek* article on the Shakespeare Authorship Question by Robert Gore-Langton that appeared on December 26, 2014 (http://www.newsweek.com/2014/12/26/campaign-prove-shakespeare-didnt-exist-293243.html). Although the title, "The Campaign to Prove Shakespeare Didn't Exist," was misleading, the article itself was a fairly balanced introduction to the authorship question. As has often happened in the last few years, the "Comments" section at the end of the online article became a battleground between Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians, with over 1,700 comments from readers the last time I checked. (See news item elsewhere in this issue.) I'm happy to say that we Oxfordians more than held our own in presenting our case. Such forums are often a good place for us to promote our position. I encourage Oxfordians to engage in such debates, always remembering that this is our chance to show neutral readers that we are more polite, rational, and on top of our facts than our opponents. Even if you don't add comments to such discussions, many sites allow readers to indicate which comments they "like," thereby pushing those comments to the top of the list, where more readers will see them. I encourage you to participate in such online discussions, which are happening more often these days because of the growing interest in the authorship question.

Last year, I gave a presentation on the authorship question to a group of theater people in the South Florida area. It was very well received, and a theater critic who saw it said that it was the best theater he had seen in a while. This led to an invitation for me to speak to the South Florida International Press Club. I've also been invited to discuss the subject on a local TV show on the arts. I'll let you know when that is available online.

We in the SOF are already looking forward with great anticipation to our next annual conference, which will be held in Ashland, Oregon, September 24-27, 2015. The conference hotel is about a block away from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where *Antony & Cleopatra*, *Pericles* and *Much Ado* will be performed in the evenings. Tickets are available to Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship conference attendees at special discounted prices. Our conference will feature a number of scholars from "across the pond," including Alexander Waugh, Ros Barber and Kevin Gilvary. Further details about the conference and information on how to register can be found on page 24 of this issue and on the SOF website (click on "Conference" in the menu bar). Don't miss this conference. It will be outstanding.

A great many of you responded positively to our appeal for donations at the end of 2014. Thanks to your

generosity, we were able to stay within our budget for the year. We are also doing well on membership renewals, with over two-thirds of our members from 2014 having already renewed their memberships for 2015. Please renew via our website if you haven't already and don't forget that you may buy introductory gift memberships for people who have never been members of the organization. They will receive four issues of the quarterly newsletter. This is a great way to encourage the interest of budding Oxfordians.

We are also gearing up the second round of our Research Grant Program, which last year distributed several thousand dollars to worthy Oxfordian research projects. This newsletter (pages 12-13) and our website contain information on how you can apply for a grant or make a donation to the program.

In news from the SOF Board of Trustees, Michael Morse has had to step down from his office as Treasurer due to his growing commitments to some important projects, and Trustee Tom Rucker has assumed the position of Treasurer, with the Board's unanimous approval. Fortunately, Michael continues to serve as a member of the Board. We thank Michael for his service as Treasurer, and we thank Tom Rucker for stepping up to succeed him.

On a personal note, I wish to express my deep appreciation to my brother, John Regnier, for creating the Shakespeare Authorship Question cartoon that appears on page 22. John created this cartoon for me as a birthday present. As you can see, John is quite a gifted artist. Recent events in France have impressed upon us that it can still be dangerous for an artist to express opinions. As we know, one of the reasons that pseudonyms were so prevalent in the Elizabethan era is that a person could be punished for saying what he thought. Today, even though Stratfordians do not physically threaten "heretics" such as us, they have many tactics for stifling dissent. We should remember that our movement is about more than just identifying the correct author of certain literary works, it is also a movement about independent thinking, freedom of expression and open discussion. *Nous sommes Charlie.*

Tom Regnier, President

Letters to the Editor

I've just got round to reading *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* and note that co-editor Alexander Waugh refers to me on pp. 75-76:

> It is a poor show when a fellow picks up his cudgels to thump a book he hasn't read, but Stratfordians are not ashamed of doing this. Oliver Kamm, a British

commentator who believes non-Stratfordianism to be some sort of conspiracy of democracy-hating anti-Semites, wrote that although he had not read Richard Roe's *Shakespeare's Guide to Italy*: "I will make an educated guess that [he] will nowhere in his research deal with the conundrum that Old Gobbo, in *The Merchant of Venice*, has a horse—in Venice—and that Milan is described in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* as port city."

> It was foolhardy of Kamm to vaunt his 'educated guess' from a standing position of ignorance, and, needless to say, he was wrong.

The reference Waugh gives for the quotation is [a column of mine](#) in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 4 January 2013. Yet the words he ascribes to me, and on which he mounts his complaint, appear nowhere in the article.

Waugh failed to check his sources. He instead merely followed the custom of anti-Shakespeare conspiracy theorists of credulously repeating each other—in this case, repeating Michael Egan from the article he sent me.

As I pointed out to Egan, so far from "proudly confessing" that I hadn't read Roe's book, I have made no comment on the book at all. My observation concerning Roe appeared on [a personal blog](#) several years before his book had even been published, and referred to a press article about his "researches."

I get regular charmless missives from Oxfordians and it might help stem the tide if you were to place on record the incompetence and ineptitude of Egan and Waugh in this matter. Their research methods fall short of the standards I would associate with the imprint of Llumina Press of Florida.

Oliver Kamm

In November 2006 Oliver Kamm published what he called an "educated guess" and got it wrong. In writing about this and other aspects of his lackluster performance in the Authorship debate, I provided source citations for his suspicions concerning the politics of non-Stratfordians and omitted to supply a citation for his "educated guess." To remind readers and to restore Kamm's hurt feelings, I now ask that you reprint the passage, exactly as it appeared in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* but with all footnotes now in their proper places.

> It is a poor show when a fellow picks up his cudgels to thump a book he hasn't read, but Stratfordians are not ashamed of doing this. Oliver Kamm, a British commentator, who believes non-Stratfordianism to be some sort of conspiracy of democracy-hating anti-

Semites,[1] wrote that although he had not read Richard Roe's *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*: "I will make an educated guess that [he] will nowhere in his research deal with the conundrum that Old Gobbo, in *The Merchant of Venice*, has a horse—in Venice—and that Milan is described in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* as a port city." It was foolhardy of Kamm to vaunt his "educated guess" from a standing position of ignorance, and, needless to say, he was wrong. Roe, referencing old maps, Italian books and his own on-site research, provided ample proof of horses in Venice and was able to identify the precise river and canal links that would have taken Valentine by boat from Verona to Milan in the late 16th Century.

[1] For Kamm's anxieties concerning anti-Semitic and anti-democratic conspiracies among non-Stratfordians see: "From Nonsense to Indecency," *Jewish Chronicle Online* (4 Jan. 2013); also his unsigned *Times* leader column (9 February 2013).

[2] Quoted from Oliver Kamm, *Shakespeare Fallacies* (16 November 2006), online at http://oliverkamm.typepad.com/blog/2006/11/shakespeare_fal.html (as of 9 December 2014).

Kamm incorrectly argues that I failed to check my sources.   "Pot", "kettle" and "black" are the words that spring to mind as I reread his "educated guess" and its clownish conclusion: "UPDATE. What a howler. In citing the 'late eclipses in the sun' referred to by Shakespeare, I did it from memory and initially published this post with the wrong reference, indeed the wrong tragedy altogether."

Alexander Waugh

This year has brought forth several new insights further strengthening the case for Oxford. I am especially thinking of Alexander Waugh's identifying "Avon" in Ben Jonson's "sweet swan of Avon" as Hampton Court and the decoding of the Latin inscription on the Stratford monument. The following insight also deserves special attention. It was communicated by Hanno Wember in his PowerPoint presentation at the 2014 Madison conference, but it is not contained in the report of this presentation in the most recent issue of the Newsletter. It deserves special attention because it answers the question why the Earl of Oxford received an annuity of £1,000 in June 1586, and it supplies an almost straightforward identification of Oxford as Shakespeare.

In his classic *The Court Society,* Norbert Elias draws our attention to a basic difference between the court society and our modern society. In court societies, Elias writes, social prestige was not based on the size of wealth but on the amount one was able to spend. Elias writes about the 17th century, about France in the reign of Louis XIV. Yet the rule also applied to England in the Tudor and Stuart ages. Sir Thomas Smith, the Cambridge professor, ambassador and secretary of state wrote in *De Republica Anglorum* (written between 1562 and 1565, printed in 1583) "and in Englande no man is created barron, excepte he may dispend of yearly revenue, one thousand poundes or one thousand markes at the least." It bears repeating: In England a man was considered a member of the peerage, the "nobilitas maior" in Sir Thomas Smith's words, if he could **spend a thousand pounds** or a thousand marks at least. In June 1586 the Earl of Oxford received a yearly grant of £1,000 enabling him to spend an amount in conformity with his rank, as King James confirmed in his 1604 letter ("Great Oxford") to Robert Cecil. This was the basic reason; we need no longer speculate whether the grant was for secret intelligence services. Two other officers received an equal annuity. "The only substantial grants were the £1,000 a year given to the Lords President of the Councils of the North and Wales to augment their grossly inadequate official salaries and to cover the cost of maintaining a suitable establishment, and…" (Lawrence Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 419). And who else? The Earl of Oxford. Wherefore? Certainly also to maintain a suitable establishment, a suitable level of **spending**. Only three people received so huge an annuity: the Lords President of the Councils of the North and Wales and the Earl of Oxford, allowing them to **spend** according to their rank.

And now we are in for a big surprise—from the Stratford vicar John Ward. What was Oxford spending for? Vicar Ward writes: "The Earl of Oxford supplied the stage with 2 plays every year, and for it had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of a 1,000*l.* a year, as I have heard." No, of course Ward does not write "the Earl of Oxford," he writes "Mr. Shakespeare." Edmund K. Chambers (*Shakespeare*, I, 89) saw no reason to doubt Ward's diary entries. He nonetheless classifies them under "The Shakespeare-Mythos" (II, 249), no doubt because of the impossibility of spending £1,000 a year in relation to the man of Stratford. And only for that reason. But Ward had heard so. Someone, maybe more than one person, had told him so. There must have been a rumour that Shakespeare spent at the rate of £1,000 a year for the theatre. Hence, some people must have known that Shakespeare and the Earl of Oxford were one and the same person. Oxfordians have no reason to classify this as "mythos" but as evidence. For apart from the two Lords President, only Oxford received a grant so huge that he could spend at the rate of £1,000 a year.

Only this year did I become aware of this nexus. Otherwise I would have communicated to Don Rubin for the 2013 Toronto conference.

Robert Detobel

I recently had the rare treat of exploring London's Middle Temple Hall. On October 11, 2014, I was the closing speaker at the annual conference of the International Federation of Technical Analysts (IFTA), hosted this year by the Society of Technical Analysts (UK). One of the attractions for attendees was dinner that evening at Middle Temple Hall, one of only two intact Elizabethan halls in England. This was a rare treat because the Hall, although available for functions, is closed to the general public. The organizers and a number of speakers, including my wife and I, were privileged to sit at the 29-foot-long, solid-oak head table, which according to lore was personally donated to Middle Temple by Queen Elizabeth I. A bit left of center (facing outward), I was sitting close to where she is recorded to have "dined many times."

Trumpet fanfares and English chamber music (including a Beatles song, in brass) were among the delights, but the best treat was unfettered access to rare paintings. Portraits adorned the walls of the Hall and many of the nearby rooms. I took special note of a portrait of Thomas Smith from the Prince's Room that includes some differences from the one available on the web, and a rarely seen portrait of Queen Elizabeth just off the main Hall. Below is a photo of the Hall during the dinner. You can see how strikingly colorful it is.

Middle Temple Hall was completed in 1573, when Oxford was riding high in Elizabeth's graces. One wonders if he, too, occasionally sat at the head table. The hall was often the site of revels, and three decades later, the Hall hosted the first documented performance of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, at the feast Candlemas in 1602.

Robert Prechter
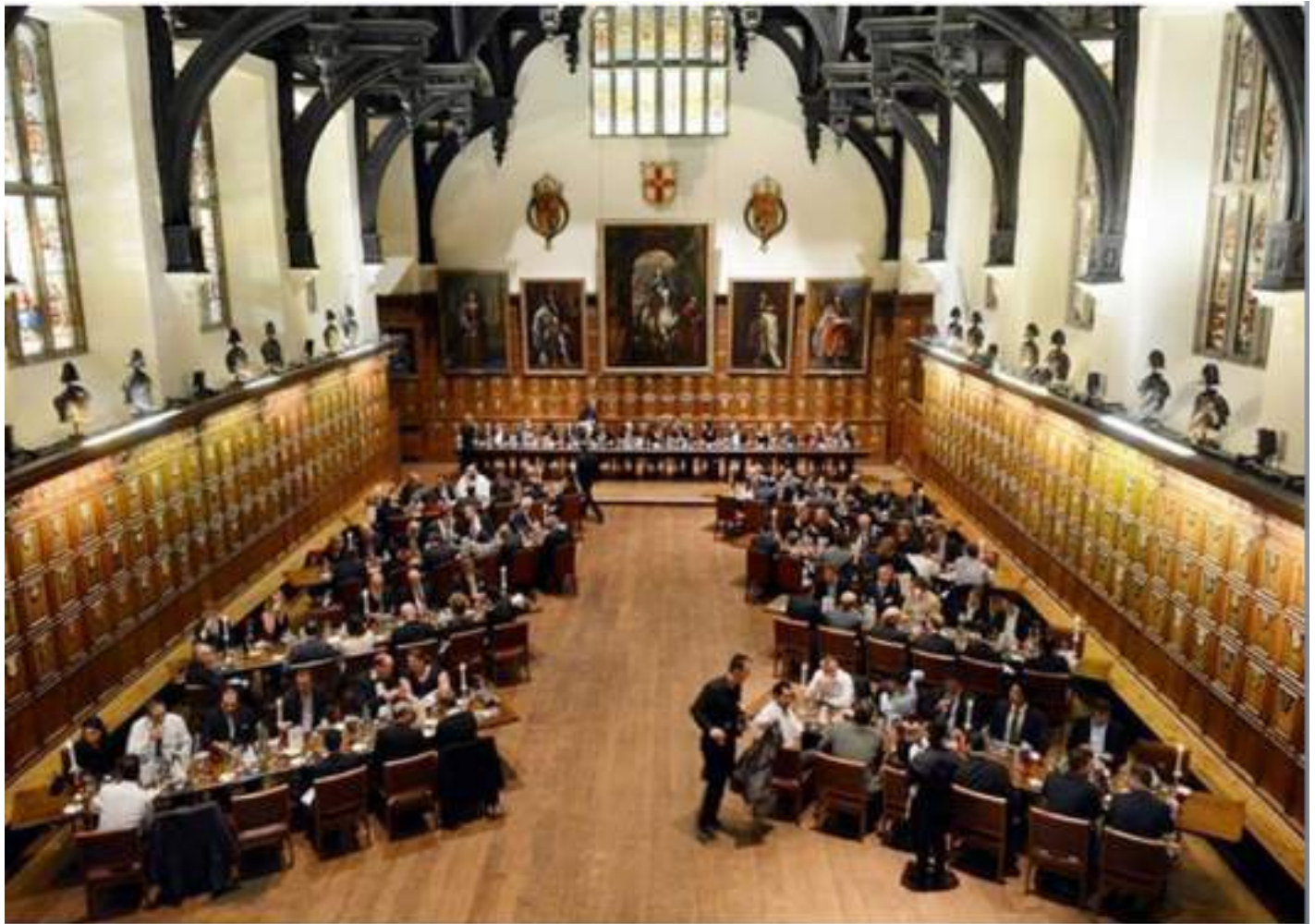
London's Middle Temple Hall

What's the News?

Chris Pannell Named New Editor of *The Oxfordian*

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship announced the appointment of Chris Pannell as the new Editor of *The Oxfordian* on December 2, 2014. Chris holds an English Honors BA from the University of Western Ontario and an MA in English from the University of Toronto.

Chris is a freelance writer, editor, and poet. He has published five books of poetry, edited two anthologies, and has led writing workshops and provided editorial help to writers in both the technical writing and literary spheres. He has served on the boards of arts groups such as the gritLIT Literary Festival and Hamilton Artists Inc. He is the host and director of the monthly Lit Live reading series in Hamilton, Ontario (http://litlive.blogspot.ca), which presents authors who have published new books of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.

One of his poetry books, *Drive*, won a Canadian award, the Acorn-Plantos Peoples Poetry Prize, in 2010. He is a member of the League of Canadian Poets (http://www.poets.ca). He has a book of poetry forthcoming in 2016, another poetry book in progress, and he is working on a novel and a collection of short stories.

Chris was introduced to the Oxfordian theory in 1985 when a friend said he'd been reading a massive book called *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* by Charlton Ogburn, Jr., and was quite puzzled by it. He couldn't understand how the argument of the book (re: Stratford unlikely and Oxford likely) had not been refuted yet. He asked: "Don't all the English professors in all the great universities in England and America know about this? What is their response?" He was afraid that he was missing something. He said, somewhat in jest, "Chris, you're a university man. Can you refute this for me? I need someone to point out where this book is going wrong." Chris agreed to do this for him.

Chris borrowed the book and began reading, but his skepticism of the book was in tatters by about page 225. The notion of William of Stratford having written so many plays in such a short time span (by conventional dating) struck him as one of the most improbable things he'd ever encountered. That the man from Stratford had never written or received a letter was bizarre. That no book had ever been traced back to the Stratford man's library was implausible. His parents and his children were illiterate? Chris laughed at the way Ogburn took apart the biography of the Stratford man. Since then, he has discovered and acquired many of the key books about the authorship question, by writers such as Mark Anderson, Roger Stritmatter, Richard Roe, Charles Beauclerk, William Farina, Katherine Chiljan and Diana Price.

When asked now about his approach to editing *The Oxfordian*, Chris says, "I am always open to discuss a writer's work. If you have an idea for an article or a finished manuscript, or if you just want to discuss the progress of *The Oxfordian*, or anything bearing on Shakespeare, please contact me. All decisions affecting a submission will come as a consequence of our talking. A successful writer-editor relationship is mostly about sharing ideas and collaborating on the best possible final draft."

Chris says that he has a very wide range of interests, where de Vere is concerned. "Submissions that are brief or time-sensitive, will likely be referred to the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*. Submissions that have a strong focus on a literary-academic discussion of the poems and plays will likely be referred to *Brief Chronicles*. I would like *The Oxfordian* to occupy the middle ground between those two types of articles: to position the authorship issue in as wide a context as possible. Some articles in *The Oxfordian* will be easily accessible to readers who may be curious about but not familiar with de Vere or other Elizabethan writers.

"Any essay on the plays, theatre, and biography of de Vere will of course be welcome and considered for publication. *The Oxfordian*, however, will try to devote as much space as possible to the context of de Vere's era—the history, politics, education, and the Renaissance in general."

Chris notes that editing is largely a reactive activity. Writers who don't send something won't be published. And of course, *The Oxfordian* needs articles to keep it going.

"Like most writers, I believe that brevity is the soul of wit (de Vere) and I have a tendency to quote a statement attributed to Pliny the Younger and others, namely: *I am sorry this letter is so long; I did not have time to make it shorter.* If your work is accepted, I will invariably try to shorten and strengthen it. I will also read all submissions with care and patience; we will discuss your work on the phone, and reach agreement on how to proceed with it. I will also present submissions to the journal's editorial board, as six or seven heads are always better than one. I look forward to talking to all writers interested in sending work to *The Oxfordian*."

If you are interested in submitting an article to *The Oxfordian*, see the guidelines at http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/the-oxfordian/oxfordian-submission-guidelines/

Send inquiries or submissions for the 2015 issue of *The Oxfordian* to Chris's email at cpannell3@cogeco.ca. Chris will share his phone number with those who send him an email first.

Newsweek Notes Authorship Question

In its issue of December 26, 2014, *Newsweek* featured an article about the Shakespeare Authorship Question. In a 1200-word piece entitled "The Campaign to Prove Shakespeare Didn't Exist," Robert Gore-Langton sketched the broad outlines of the debate and reported on the efforts of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC) to engage the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in "open debate" whether it is beyond reasonable doubt that "William Shakespeare of Stratford was the author of the Canon." Gore-Langton cited the SAC's offer of £40,000 to back up its challenge, which was "curtly denied" by the Birthplace Trust.

Gore-Langton then quoted "the irrepressible" Alexander Waugh, honorary president of the SAC: "Can you believe it? A registered charity turned down the opportunity of £40,000 to defend the very basis on which they are founded! We are now considering a formal complaint to the Charities Commission and appealing to anyone who would like to join in a class action suit against the Trust for all the money they've taken under false pretences. I am publicly accusing them of that and I am waiting for my writ. Where is it?"

Gore-Langton cited Waugh's new book, *Shakespeare in Court*, which "sifts the evidence and, without putting forward any other candidate, asserts that there are plenty of reasons to think Shakespeare was a front man or pseudonym for some highly educated, well-travelled courtier, who preferred to keep his identity secret in an age when pen-names were common." (In October 2014, Gore-Langton had written a positive review of

Shakespeare in Court for the London *Express* [see the Fall 2014 issue of this *Newsletter*].)

Gore-Langton specifically mentioned Oxford , noting the controversy that attended Roland Emmerich's 2011 film, *Anonymous*. He went on to say that "the case against Shakespeare is as vociferous today as at any time since it first gained credence in the mid-19th century."

The title of the *Newsweek* article was probably the most unfortunate thing about it. Nobody is trying to prove that Shakespeare—or Shakspere of Stratford—didn't exist. More importantly, the article generated more than 1700 comments on the *Newsweek* website, and a number of Oxfordians took part. In response to the shrill comments by Stratford apologists that any connections between events in Oxford's life and events depicted in Shakespeare's works are not "evidence," but only "coincidences," SOF President (and attorney) Tom Regnier submitted the following comment:

Coincidences are the essence of circumstantial evidence. That is why all the parallels between the Earl of Oxford's life and Shakespeare's works are not just coincidences, they are circumstantial evidence. But don't take my word for it. Hear it from some legal experts on evidence. The following is a quotation from the "Doctrine of Coincidences" by Charles Reade, which I found in *The Principles of Judicial Proof* (1913), edited by John H. Wigmore, one of the great evidence scholars of all time:

"I proceed to state the leading principle . . . the progressive value of proved coincidences all pointing to one conclusion. . . . I will now show [the] ascending value [of coincidences] when proved in open court and tested by cross-examination. 'A' was found dead of a gun shot wound, and the singed paper that had been used for wadding lay near him. It was a fragment of the Times. 'B''s house was searched, and they found there a gun recently discharged, and the copy of the Times, from which the singed paper aforesaid had been torn; the pieces fitted exactly. The same thing happened in France with a slight variation; the paper used for wadding was part of an old breviary subsequently found in 'B''s house. The salient facts of each case made a treble coincidence sworn, cross-examined, and unshaken; hanged the Englishman, and guillotined the Frenchman. In neither case was there a scintilla of direct evidence; in neither case was the verdict impugned. I speak within bounds when I say that a genuine double coincidence, proved beyond doubt, is not twice, but two hundred times, as strong, as one such coincidence, and that a genuine treble coincidence is many thousand times as strong as one such coincidence. But, when we get to a five fold coincidence real and proved, it is a million to one against all these honest circumstances having combined to deceive us."

Sonnets Mystery Solved Once Again

In late January and early February many media outlets carried the story that someone new has been proposed as "Mr. W. H.," the dedicatee of *Shake-speares Sonnets*, first published in 1609.

Dalya Alberge's article in the January 31 edition of *The Guardian* was typical. She reported that Geoffrey Caveney, "an American researcher," has suggested that the Sonnet dedication was written by the publisher, Thomas Thorpe (the initials "T.T." appear underneath the dedication), in memory of a colleague, William Holme, who died in 1607 and "had both personal and professional connections to Thorpe."

Obviously, Holme has the right initials, and was involved in the publishing and printing business. He published Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* in 1600 and Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive* in 1606, and worked with George Eld, who printed the *Sonnets*. The fact that he was not an aristocrat captures the attention of those Stratfordians who believe that the dedicatee could not have been a nobleman. "That it's not an aristocrat fits in with the fact that it's 'Mr W. H.,'" said noted Stratfordian Stanley Wells. "That has always been a stumbing block for the attempts to identify him with [aristocrats]." Wells also noted that identifying the dedicatee as someone like William Holme makes it "less attractive if it's not somebody whom we could associate possibly with the substance of the sonnets."

Caveney suggests that the unusual layout of the 1609 dedication was Thorpe's effort to make the dedication resemble a Roman funerary monument.
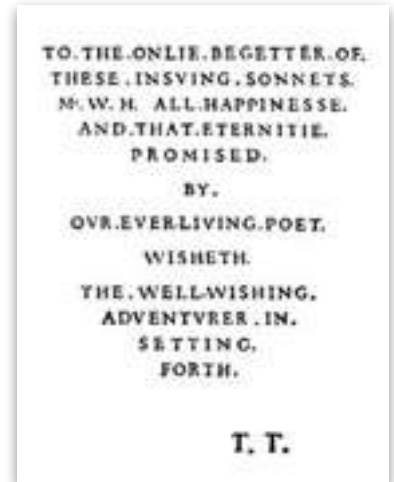
It is interesting that Caveney is described as a "researcher," not as an academician. His full findings will be published in the February 2015 *Notes & Queries*. We wonder if he will address any of the following points:

(1) Since there were only about two dozen printing presses in the entire country—almost all of them in London—wouldn't *all* the printers and publishers have had connections with each other?

(2) Is William Holme the "begetter" of the Sonnets, as the dedicatee is described? What connection did he have with Shakespeare (or Shakspere)?

(3) Why does the dedication refer to the poet—the author of the Sonnets—as "ever-living"? Doesn't that word strongly suggest that the poet is dead?

(4) If the real dedicatee was Henry Wriothesley (as many Stratfordians and Oxfordians believe to be the case), wouldn't it have been entirely proper to refer to him as "Mr." between 1601 and 1603, when he'd been stripped of his noble titles and estates after his conviction for treason?


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TO.THE.ONLIE.BEGETTER.OF.
THESE.INSVING.SONNETS.
Mʳ. W. H. ALL.HAPPINESSE.
AND.THAT.ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OVR.EVER-LIVING.POET.
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Keir Cutler Performs "Is Shakespeare Dead?" at Toronto Public Library

In early November Keir Cutler's adaptation of Mark Twain's "Is Shakepeare Dead?" was presented at the main Toronto Public Library before an audience of over 100. Similar events to this one generally draw about half that number at this major venue, so the interest was real.

After the performance Cutler was joined onstage by Professor (and SOF trustee) Don Rubin for a discussion of the Shakespeare Authorship Question. The entire evening was a wonderful success. The crowd sat riveted by the performance and were fully engaged in discussion that followed.

It seemed that a lot of new doubters of the traditional story of William of Stratford have joined our ranks. Many positive comments were posted online from the event, such as this one: "Very thought provoking. I never really considered that there is something to the debate around whether Shakespeare is the man most of us think he was. Greatly enjoyed the discussion following the play."

One surprise from the evening was that, considering the size of the audience, no one made even a half-hearted attempt to defend the orthodox position. One man did ask sincerely, "What is the case that William of Stratford wrote Shakespeare?" In fact, there were no Stratfordians in attendance to defend old Will. It was, in fact, left to Cutler to say, "It's always been thought true, so the basic position is that it must be true. Some traditions die hard."

Because of the interest shown, the Toronto Public Library (within its very limited budget) is now considering other events connected to the authorship. Stay tuned.

Incidentally, a video of Keir Cutler's version of "Is Shakespeare Dead?" is available on YouTube and gets thousands of hits every year. It was viewed in 96 countries in the last year; the United States led the pack with well over 2,000 viewings, many viewers watching the entire 44-minute presentation.

Musician Steve Earle Is an Oxfordian

Sometimes the Shakespeare Authorship Question pops up where you don't expect it. So it was last fall in an issue of the online magazine AmericanSongwriter.com, where American singer-songwriter Steve Earle weighed in on the topic, coming down emphatically on the side of Edward de Vere.

In the November 20 issue, Earle was interviewed by Caine O'Rear in connection with his upcoming album, *Terraplane*. Although most of the interview dealt with music—American blues in particular—the subject eventually turned to Shakespeare. An edited version appears below. The full article can be found at http://www.americansongwriter.com/2014/11/studio-steve-earle-gets-low-terraplane-blues/.

So are you still a big Shakespeare buff?

Yeah. I don't think that the glovemaker's son wrote those plays.... I think Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote them. So does the greatest Shakespearean actor of our time, so did Mark Twain, so does Meryl Streep.

I don't know if I believe that. Is there evidence?

There's tons of evidence. There's evidence both ways.... There's no way it was a bunch of people. It was one person, in my mind, and it pisses [fellow musician] Billy Bragg off because he thinks I'm being elitist, and I'm far from an elitist.

There's no way [it was] someone who'd never been to Italy, was illiterate ... and that's probably true of Shakespeare and most actors of his time. He could read but he couldn't write, because that was a much harder thing to learn to do then. He had no intimate knowledge of life at court, and didn't have political protection to keep him from getting his f***ing head chopped off with some of the things he was parodying and some of the things he was writing about. [One] theory about de Vere is that he was either Elizabeth's son or Elizabeth's lover. Some people even think both. My guess is that he was her son, or somehow related to her, anyway. And so he got away with it. But it's one person, it's a singular genius voice. There's no way ... there was more than one person that brilliant in Elizabethan England, when there were only 100,000 people in London and the whole area. It just doesn't make sense.

Like with Marlowe and Ben Jonson. Their voices were so different from the Shakespeare plays, there's just no way—

Yeah, and Ben Jonson is where a lot of the clues that it may have been de Vere come from. Ben Jonson wrote the preface to the First Folio, he's the one who called him "The Soul Of The Age" and all that stuff. And they all were writing really great stuff, but nobody was writing

anything like that.... [H]e became a big deal—Shakespeare's plays were being staged and they were hits in London. And at that moment Elizabeth was patronizing theater. She didn't go out to the theater, she couldn't do that, but plays were brought in and performed at court. And she was the very first monarch in Europe that did that, which is another clue.

But there are a lot of books about it, and there's a lot of evidence, and people are horrified of it. There's a film called *Anonymous* that's about the authorship and it's just a shoot-em-up. Every theory is about Edward de Vere being the actual William Shakespeare, and who the real William Shakespeare was, and why he got set up. I think it's really simple. I think he had to have a front because he was the Earl of Oxford and he couldn't be a playwright, so I think he just set up a guy and paid him, because Shakespeare retired and went back to his hometown and set himself up in a wool business and f***ing sold wool for the rest of his life after becoming the greatest playwright and actor of his age. It just doesn't make sense.

He was a hoarder too; he hoarded grain during the plague, which was a bad thing to do.

Yeah, he was a businessman. That's what he was. He was a Republican. But yeah, I believe that.

* * * * * *

Born in 1955, Steve Earle dropped out of school at age sixteen and settled in Nashville at age nineteen. His first studio album, *Guitar Town*, went to number one on the country album charts in 1986 and was widely acclaimed. Considered one of the pioneers of "new country," he has released at least fifteen studio albums. His songs have been recorded by such notables as Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings and Emmylou Harris. He has won three Grammys. He has written a novel (*I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive*), a play and a collection of short stories. He is also an outspoken opponent of capital punishment.

Ron Halstead (1940-2014)

Shortly after the Fall 2014 issue of the *Newsletter* went to press, we received the sad news that Ron Halstead had passed away suddenly on November 7, 2014. Ron was one of the founders of the Oberon Shakespeare Study Group in suburban Detroit, and was a regular presenter at Shakespeare Authorship Conferences.

Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on October 9, 1940, Ronald Douglas Halstead earned a scholarship to Albion College in Albion, Michigan, where he majored in psychology. He planned to become a minister and enrolled at the University of Chicago for theological education. However, after taking a course taught by Paul Tillich, he found that he was too independent a thinker to adjust to the strictures of theology. He left Chicago and returned to his home state, where he earned a Masters in English at Wayne State University. He married Barbara Burris in 1967.

Ron worked in the mental health field, developing group homes for mentally disabled individuals and monitoring homes. He also taught English at adult education centers, community colleges and universities.

His interest in the Shakespeare Authorship Question was ignited when he brought home for his wife a copy of Joseph Sobran's book, *Alias Shakespeare*, published in 1997. Not long after that, he helped establish the Oberon Shakespeare Study Group, which has met monthly in the greater Detroit area for the last decade and a half. Richard Joyrich, SOF trustee and current chair of the Oberon group, remarked: "I have known Ron Halstead for fifteen years, ever since the Oberon group was founded by Ron, his wife Barbara Burris, and myself. During this time, I

have come to know Ron as a scholar and a gentleman. He has been very active in presenting his many research interests to us at the Oberon Group as well as presenting many of them at several national conferences. I was constantly amazed at how well informed Ron was on almost any subject that would come up. In addition, I always found him to be extremely cordial and easy to talk to, while at the same time, he would stick to the conclusions he had reached. I can honestly say that there is now yet another unfillable hole in the Oberon group. Ron will be very sorely missed by all of us."

At a memorial service held on November 22, Oberon member Robin Browne recalled: "Over the years we have shared many enjoyable hours together, at meetings Ron would often enthrall us with his research and original ideas, at book shops we would hunt out new publications together.... Had Ron Halstead lived 400 years ago he would have been at one with the [real Shakespeare]. He had all the same attributes, a brilliant mind, knowledge of the classics, well read, a student of the Bible and someone who smiled, laughed and had a wonderful sense of humor."

Ron also attended many of the Joint Conferences sponsored by the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship, and presented papers at several. His most recent presentation was at the September 2014 Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship conference in Madison, Wisconsin, where he spoke on "What's Hecuba to Him? Connecting Life and Drama in *Hamlet*."

Ron is survived by his wife of forty-seven years, Barbara Burris. Like Ron, her interest in who really wrote Shakespeare was sparked by reading Sobran's book, and she too is an avid and outspoken Oxfordian.

[Some of the above information first appeared on the Oberon blog.]

James Webster "Jaz" Sherwood (1936-2014)

Noted Oxfordian and prolific writer James Webster "Jaz" Sherwood passed away on December 26, 2014, in Scottsdale, AZ. A former president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, Sherwood was an early advocate of merging the SOS with the Shakespeare Fellowship and was instrumental in arranging the first Joint Conference of the two organizations in 2005.

Jaz was born in Hollywood on May 18, 1936. His grandfather was a founder of General Mills, and an uncle created Wheaties breakfast cereal. Jaz was educated at The Choate School (now Choate Rosemary Hall) in Connecticut, wrote his first novel at age 14, and had short stories published a few years later.

His published works include short stories, poetry (including original sonnets, many of which were collected in *Some Sonnets of Flame & Flower*), novels (including *Stradella* [1961], called "the Hollywood novel 'par excellence'" by the Los Angeles *Times*) and the

autobiographical *Going to the Sun: A Remembrance of Life in Glacier Park*. After immersing himself in the Shakespeare Authorship Question, he wrote a historical mystery novel, *Shakespeare's Ghost*, published by Opus Books in 2002. Matthew Cossolotto, also a past president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, recalled meeting Sherwood at an SOS conference in Washington, DC: "Jaz befriended me from the start.... We hit it off. He had a keen intellect and was full of entertaining witticisms. Very tolerant of dissenting opinions. I admired his optimism about Oxford and his confidence that the truth will out one day. He will be missed both as a friend and as a dedicated Oxfordian." Former Shakespeare Fellowship president Earl Showerman fondly recalled Jaz as "a prince and a diplomat. He was particularly instrumental in getting the SOS and SF to start holding joint conferences in 2005. A decade of successful joint conferences provided the foundation for uniting the SOS and SF, a development that he essentially initiated. He always saw the bigger picture."

James Sherwood leaves his wife, Karyn.

Charles Champlin (1926-2014)

Noted film critic and columnist Charles Champlin died at his Los Angeles home on November 16, 2014, at the age of 88. Born in Hammondsport, NY, he graduated from Harvard in 1948 (his time there was interrupted by military service in World War II), and was hired by *Life* magazine. He remained with the magazine for more than a decade. In 1965 he joined the staff of the Los Angeles *Times*, serving for the next twenty-six years in several capacities: reporter, columnist, reviewer and entertainment editor. He was the paper's chief film critic from 1967 to 1980. He later estimated that during that period he saw 250 films a year and reviewed about half of them.

Champlin is probably best remembered by Oxfordians for the lengthy and positive book review he wrote for Charlton Ogburn, Jr.'s *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* in 1984, which was published in the *Time*s' book review section. Portions of the review were excerpted on the dust jacket of the 1992 edition of Ogburn's book. Champlin wrote: "It is, undeniably, easier to reject the Stratford man as Shakespeare than it is to accept Oxford as Shakespeare, although the case as Ogburn makes it, piling up parallels, coincidences, inferences, interpretations and circumstantial evidence to dizzying heights, creates the most persuasive presentation yet." Champlin briefly summarized the history of the Oxfordian movement, inaugurated by John Thomas Looney in 1920. Champlin also summarized Oxford's biography. He went on: "The most revealing passages in 'The Mysterious William Shakespeare' are Ogburn's indicting rebuttals of the orthodox Stratfordians, who have for centuries been transmuting surmise into fact about Shakspere's life, and dismissing with scorn rather than evaluating and answering the serious explorers of the authorship question." He concluded: "[T]he major achievement of Ogburn's patient and eloquent labors is that the evidence mounted for the Earl of Oxford can no longer be ignored by reputable scholars. It is an engrossing detective story, and Stratford's touristy charm must now be forever suspect."

Champlin also assisted in the establishment of the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable in Los Angeles. Carole Sue Lipman, one of the founders, wrote that Champlin "first wrote an article on the front page of the LA *Times* Calendar Arts section after having had dinner in Pasadena in early 1983 with the Crowleys, the Roes and the Millers when he himself first learned about the Earl of Oxford and the authorship. I contacted him then and he agreed to moderate a panel of experts for a one-day seminar, which was ultimately rejected by UCLA Extension, but that only inspired him to help us by being [part of] the six-month seminar and writing a Calendar cover story for each of those sessions. The rest is thirty years of the Roundtable."

Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grant Program

Summary of Major Points

The purpose of this grant program is to promote new research about Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford: new research about his biography, his literary life, and evidence for, and supporting evidence for, his case as the true author of the Shakespeare canon.

The plan for 2015 is to award $20,000 in grants depending on the amount of money raised.
- Funds will be raised from membership and friends.
- Approximately two to four grants are 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 may suggest topics or activities that they are interested in.
- Proposals will be accepted through May 30, 2015, with the Selection Committee's decision announced by August 30, 2015.
- Members of the Selection Committee for this second round are: Katherine Chiljan, Bonner Cutting, Ramon Jiménez, John Hamill and Don Rubin.

Grant Program Rules

1. The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship intends to make 2 to 4 cash grants to scholars and researchers for the purpose of developing new knowledge about the 17th Earl of Oxford, and new knowledge that advances his case for the Shakespeare Authorship. Members of this RGP committee and of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Board of Trustees are not eligible for consideration for a grant.

2. Grant applicants must focus on a specific topic for research, and not general research. Applicants must outline a specific plan of action, identify the expected results, and how this will advance Oxfordian and Shakespeare Authorship studies. Applicants must have pre-researched the topic, feeling confident of expected results. Applicants

must already have information about the archives involved, verified access to use them, know the time when the archives are open, etc. If archives are in a foreign language (Latin, Italian, etc.), competence is required.

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 about the 17th Earl of Oxford and his case for the Shakespeare Authorship.

   b. Research that will identify a previously unknown person or place mentioned in the Shakespeare canon that is related to the 17th Earl of Oxford, and that will support his case for the Shakespeare Authorship.

   c. Examples of specific research projects follow:
   - Search for surviving letters of Oxford's secretary, Antony Munday (or John Lyly, Sturmius of Germany, et al.) and examine them for new information about Oxford.
   - Research in archives of Italian cities for existing letters of Baptista Nigrone and Pasquino Spinola, who helped with Oxford's finances during his European tour.
   - New research on actor/author Robert Armin, who possibly referred to Oxford when he wrote that he would "take my journey (to wait on the right honorable good Lord my Master whom I serve) to Hackney."
   - Research in a private library in the United Kingdom that may have a connection with the Earl of Oxford or his descendants for documents hitherto unknown.
   - New research on the founder of Oxfordianism, J.T. Looney, for the centennial celebration.

   d. Projects not recommended are: research based on cryptograms, ciphers, stylometry or computer analysis.

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. Awards will not cover salaries or personal stipends for the principal investigator.

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 Oxfordian and Shakespeare Authorship studies.

10. Grants will be financed by specific donations to the Program, to a 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, the Fellowship will make one or more grants of $2,000 to $20,000.

13. Grantees will be expected to complete their research within nine months of receiving their grant award and submit a written report to the SOF Board of Trustees within the following three months. A summary of the project will be published in one of the SOF publications whether or not the project achieved the expected results. The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will announce the names of the grantees in the newsletter along with the amount of the award, and either the title of the research grant or the general subject matter (in case confidentiality is necessary).

14. Grantees will be encouraged to submit papers of 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 $2,000 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

Six Characters in Search of an Author (cont. from p. 1)

Sir John Oldcastle / Derick *(Famous Victories)* →	Sir John Falstaff *(1 & 2 Henry IV; MWW)*
Ned *(Famous Victories)* →	Edward Poins *(1 & 2 Henry IV)*
Mistress Cobbler *(Famous Victories)* →	Mistress Quickly *(1 & 2 Henry IV; Henry V)*
Ferando *(The Taming of a Shrew)* →	Petruchio *(The Taming of the Shrew)*
Christopher Sly *(The Taming of a Shrew)* →	Christopher Sly *(The Taming of the Shrew)*
The Bastard Philip Faulconbridge *(The Troublesome Reign of John)* →	The Bastard Philip Faulconbridge *(King John)*

Sir John Falstaff

It is generally acknowledged that *Famous Victories* was a source for the Prince Hal trilogy.[1] And it is in *Famous Victories* that we find the original of Falstaff. Of the ten comics in the play, nine men and one woman, Shakespeare combined two—Sir John Oldcastle and Derick—to create Falstaff, widely considered his most original character. It is also acknowledged, and the evidence is convincing, that in the original performances of *1 Henry IV* the fat knight character was named Sir John Oldcastle. In the quarto of 1599, and in subsequent publications, his name was changed to Sir John Falstaff.[2] Further, in the epilogue to *2 Henry IV* it is explicitly stated that "Oldcastle died [a] martyr, and this is not the man"(32).[3]

The Oldcastle/Derick character bears the same relationship to Prince Hal in *Famous Victories* that Falstaff bears to him in Shakespeare's plays. Between them, they appear in nine of the play's twenty scenes, and they say and do many of the same things that Falstaff says and does in the canonical plays. And between them, they display nearly all the characteristics that we see in Falstaff.[4]

The Oldcastle of *Famous Victories*, with Prince Hal and two others, robs two of the King's receivers on Gad's Hill in Kent. The four of them retire to a tavern in Eastcheap. In a separate incident, Derick is also robbed near the same place. In II.ii of *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff and three companions rob a group of travelers on Gad's Hill, and are subsequently robbed themselves by Poins and Prince Hal. Two scenes later, they all retire to a tavern in Eastcheap.

In a conversation with Oldcastle in Scene 5 of *Famous Victories*, Prince Hal notes the prevalence "nowadays" of prisons, hangings and whippings, and adds. "But I tell you, sirs, when I am king we shall have

no such things." [5] In *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff asks of Prince Hal, "Shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king?" Hal's reply suggests that hangings will be rare (I.ii.57-68).

In Scene 7 of *Famous Victories*, Derick complains bitterly of the meal prepared for him by Mistress Cobbler, and calls her a knave and a whore. They clash again in Scene 10 and physically assault each other. In Act III of *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff and Mistress Quickly argue at length about money he owes her for food and wine. He calls her "Dame Partlet," a traditional name for a scolding woman, questions her honesty, and suggests that she is a prostitute (III.iii). Both Oldcastle in *Famous Victories* (Scene 5) and Falstaff in *1 Henry IV* (I.ii) express their expectation that they will prosper when Prince Hal becomes king. Both welcome King Henry's death, but both are among the group that is rejected by the new King Henry.

Derick's boasts and tricks on the battlefield of Agincourt in Scene 19 of *Famous Victories* are nearly identical to those of Falstaff after he and his companions are robbed by Poins and Prince Hal. Derick brags to John Cobbler that he was "four or five times slain" and that he was called "the bloody soldier amongst them all" because "Every day when I went into the field I would take a straw and thrust it into my nose and make my nose bleed. . . ." He adds that when he was confronted with an actual French soldier, he "skipped quite over a hedge; and he saw me no more that day."

In Act II of *1 Henry IV*, Prince Hal and his companions exchange accounts in the Eastcheap tavern about the two robberies that have just taken place. Falstaff claims that after he and the others robbed the King's receivers he was set upon by eleven men, and that he drove off seven of them. Prince Hal replies that only he and Poins assaulted Falstaff and his three companions, and that Falstaff fled without a fight. He accuses Falstaff of hacking his sword to make it look like he used it to defend himself, and Peto later confirms it. Bardolph reports that Falstaff told them to "tickle our noses with spear-grass, to make them bleed"(II.iv.309-310).

In Scene 10 of *Famous Victories*, as Derick is being pressed into military service by a Captain, he exclaims, "Marry, I have brought two shirts with me. . . ." In Act I of *2 Henry IV*, as Falstaff departs to join the King's forces against the rebels he remarks, "Lord, I take but two shirts out with me . . ." (I.ii.209). The Oldcastle/Derick character in *Famous Victories* and Falstaff in the Prince Hal plays are both swaggering soldiers in military service against their will. They are both dupes, cowards and braggarts. Each is a clever punster, and each is known as an excessive eater and drinker. It is clear that Sir John Falstaff, as he is portrayed in the Prince Hal plays, is not an historical figure, but a character derived from a composite of Sir John Oldcastle and Derick in *Famous Victories*.

Edward Poins

The Edward Poins of the two *Henry IV* plays is identical with the Ned of *Famous Victories.* In all three plays Prince Hal repeatedly calls him "Ned," and in all three he and Prince Hal carry out a robbery at Gad's Hill. In *Famous Victories*, they are joined by Tom and Sir John Oldcastle in a robbery of the King's receivers. In *1 Henry IV*, after Oldcastle and the others have robbed the receivers, Poins and the Prince rob them. In all three plays Poins speaks familiarly to Prince Hal and is his closest companion.

In Scene 9 of *Famous Victories*, Poins suggests to the new King Henry V that he does not grieve over his father's death. Henry then tells him to "mend thy manners" and that he must "change" in the same way that Henry has. In a long conversation between them in *2 Henry IV*, Poins calls the new King a hypocrite for pretending to grieve over his father's illness. Henry responds coolly, and suggests that it is the "vile company" of Falstaff and Poins that has caused him to appear unmoved by his father's illness (II.ii.28-55).

Although a Poins family was prominent in the early fifteenth century, no member of it was a close associate of Prince Hal either before or after he became Henry V. The Poins of the Shakespeare plays is a replica of the Poins of *Famous Victories*, and neither is a historical character.

Mistress Quickly

The literary ancestor of the Mistress Quickly in the two *Henry IV* plays is Mistress Cobbler, the wife of John Cobbler in *Famous Victories*. Both women are members of the group of comics associated with Prince Hal before and after he becomes Henry V. In Scene 7 of *Famous Victories*, Mistress Cobbler engages in the dispute over a meal with the Oldcastle/Derick character described above. Mistress Quickly has a similar dispute with Falstaff about the bill for his food and wine in the *Henry IV* plays. In all three plays the Oldcastle/Derick/Falstaff character insults and slanders the woman who has served him food.

In Scene 10 of *Famous Victories*, after Oldcastle/ Derick and Mistress Cobbler have assaulted each other, he threatens to "clap the law on your back," and suggests to the recruiting Captain that he "press her for a soldier." In *2 Henry IV* Mistress Quickly attempts to have Falstaff arrested for debt, and they exchange mutual threats (II.i).It is clear that Shakespeare has, in the two *Henry IV* plays, simply reused and renamed the female foil to the Oldcastle/Derick character in *Famous Victories*. He has beefed up her role considerably and made her a more believable character, but retained her behavior, her language and her relationship with the fat knight.

Petruchio

The Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* is the same flamboyant, fast-talking shrew-tamer that we see in Ferando, the shrew-tamer in the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew*, published in 1594. They are both gentlemen seeking a wealthy wife, and resolve to woo Kate/ Katherina, despite her reputation as a shrew. In both plays, Ferando/Petruchio, even before he meets Kate/ Katherina, arranges for a large cash payment from her father upon their marriage. On meeting the shrew, each one praises her qualities and declares that they will marry. By the middle of each play, they have both become irritable and domineering buffoons. In both plays, they boast that they will tame the shrew, but she mocks them and they engage in a dialogue of bantering insults.

In both plays, Ferando/Petruchio arrives late for the wedding and is "basely attired" (*A Shrew* 4.143), wearing "unreverent robes" (*The Shrew* III.ii.112). In both plays, he is offered a different suit, but refuses to change clothes. Kate/Katherina denounces his behavior and calls him "mad" (*A Shrew*, Scene 4) and a "mad-brain" (*The Shrew* III.ii.10). After the wedding, both Ferando and Petruchio demand that he and his bride depart on his horse immediately, over the protests of the shrew and the wedding guests.

In Scene 8 of *A Shrew* Ferando attempts to tame Kate by depriving her of food and sleep. In *The Shrew* Petruchio attempts the same thing in the same way (IV.i. 188-211). In this context, they express the same thought in nearly the same words:

Ferando: This *humour* must I hold me to awhile,
    To bridle and hold back my *headstrong wife*
    With *curbs* of hunger, ease, and want of sleep.
        A Shrew 6.37-39

Petruchio: *This is a way to kill a wife with kindness;*
    And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humor.
        The Shrew IV.i.208-209 (Italics added)

In both plays, Ferando/Petruchio becomes angry with his servants for serving burnt meat and "beats" them (*A Shrew*, Scene 8; *The Shrew* IV.i.165). In both plays, mention is made of a "taming school" where Ferando/ Petruchio is the master (*A Shrew* 5.25-27; *The Shrew* IV.ii.55-56), and in both he demands help with his boots (*A Shrew*, Scene 6; *The Shrew* IV.i.144). A haberdasher and a tailor are brought in to furnish Kate/Katherina with a hat and a gown, but Ferando/Petruchio rejects them immediately, even though she thinks them fashionable and wishes to wear them.

The outcome of the tamer's efforts is the same in both plays. On his demand, the shrew agrees to call the sun the moon, and to refer to an old man as a woman, etc. The result of the wager is that Kate/Katherina comes to her husband when commanded by him, after the other two wives have refused. At the tamer's command Kate/ Katherina throws down her cap, fetches the other two wives, and exhorts them to love and obey their husbands. As an example, she offers to place her hand under her husband's feet. At the end, each tamer has won his wager, and departs triumphantly with the shrew.

Although the characters and incidents in both plays are loosely based on those appearing in one or more

"shrew-taming" folk tales,[6] Ferando in *A Shrew* is a distinctive fictional creation, and Petruchio in the canonical *The Shrew* is his near twin.

Christopher Sly

Similarly, the person who announces that "I am Christophero Sly; call not me honour/ nor lordship" in the canonical *The Shrew* (Ind. 17-18) is the same person, also named Sly, who declares "Why Sim, am not I Don Christo Vary?" in the anonymous *A Shrew* (Sly Interlude 3). The first scene in the framing plot in both plays opens with a drunkard named Sly exiting a tavern after quarreling with the proprietor, and then falling asleep. A lord, who has been hunting, enters with his men and his dogs. He regards the sleeping Sly with disgust, but then orders him to be carried to "my fairest chamber" in his nearby house. He instructs his servants to address and treat Sly as a "lord" when he awakes.

In the second scene in both plays, music is playing when Sly awakes; he is dressed in luxurious clothing, and a banquet is set before him. He calls for ale; servants offer him wine and refer to his horses and his dogs. The lord presents himself as a commoner and suggests to Sly a variety of activities, as if he were a wealthy nobleman. Sly asks, "Who I, am I a lord?" (*A Shrew*, 2.14; *The Shrew,* Ind.ii.68) A servant boy enters, disguised as Sly's wife, and presents herself to him. Sly suggests that he and she will go to bed shortly, but she puts him off.

Although the idea has its origins in folklore, the characters and their interactions in the framing plot of both plays are fictitious creations, and those in the anonymous *A Shrew* are nearly exactly duplicated in the canonical *The Shrew*. Christopher Sly has the same name, experiences the same elaborate prank, and utters nearly the same words in both plays. The only difference is that in *The Shrew* Sly and the others disappear after the second Induction scene. In *A Shrew* he and the lord are part of the extended dramatic framework, reappearing throughout the play and in the closing scene.

Philip Faulconbridge the Bastard

The most unusual and interesting character in Shakespeare's *King John* is the Bastard Philip Faulconbridge, who has nearly ninety speeches in the play, and speaks only a few lines less than King John. Some attempts have been made to connect him to a particular historical person, but none of them renounces his patrimony as does Philip Faulconbridge, nor were any of them an insider at John's court. But he is the literary descendant and a nearly perfect match for the Bastard of the identical name in the anonymous *The Troublesome Reign of John,* published in 1591.

In the first scene of both plays, Philip Faulconbridge's younger brother Robert accuses him of illegitimacy— not being the son and heir of the recently
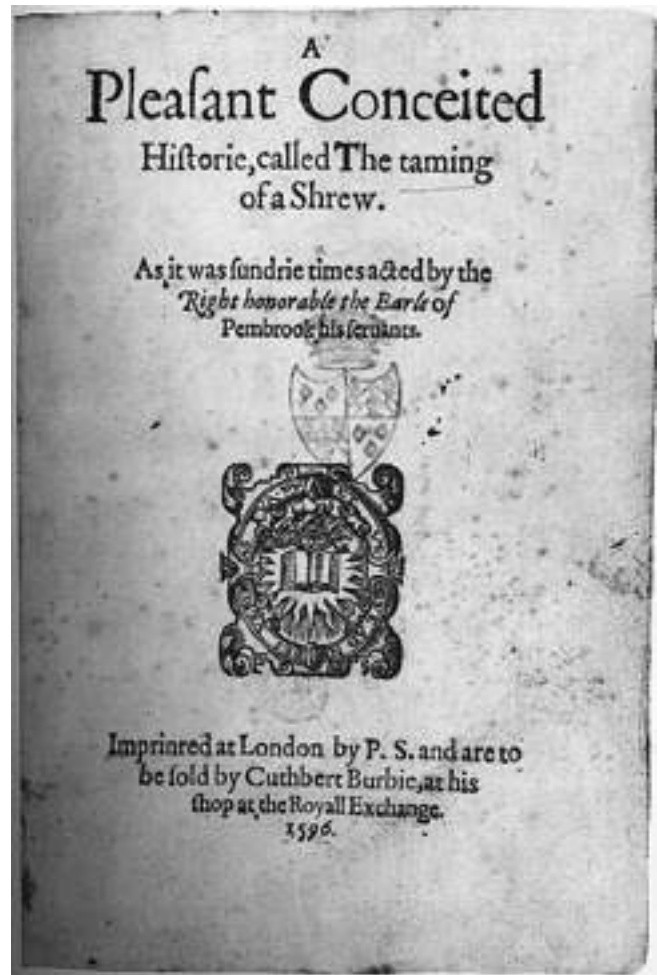
deceased Sir Robert Faulconbridge. Robert declares that Philip, though born of the same mother, was actually fathered by King Richard the Lionheart while their father was away on a diplomatic mission. After first denying the charge, Philip admits to it, and proudly affirms that he is King Richard's son, ceding his inheritance to his younger brother Robert. Philip then induces his mother to acknowledge his true parentage. In both plays King John observes that Philip resembles King Richard, pronounces him Richard's son, and knights him, renaming him Sir Richard Plantagenet. Nothing of the sort occurred in King John's court; Philip is entirely the playwright's creation.

The Faulconbridge of *King John* is a more mature and less aggressive character than the Faulconbridge of *Troublesome Reign*. But he is the same witty, cynical and articulate critic of the people and events around him. He is annoyed at the betrothal of Blanche, King John's niece, to the Dauphin (he thought he would marry her himself). He slays Limoges, Duke of Austria (whom he thought had killed his father, Richard the Lionheart). In both plays King John sends Philip to ransack the abbeys and priories for money for his army. In both plays Philip scolds the Dauphin and declares that the English will crush him. In both plays the fictional Faulconbridge becomes King

John's right-hand man and is with him at the end, when John dies from a poisonous drink.

Both *Troublesome Reign* and *King John* end with a patriotic speech by Philip containing nearly identical lines about the need for England to remain united against her foes.

Philip the Bastard:
>   Thus England's peace begins in Henry's reign,
>   And bloody wars are closed with happy league.
>   Let England live but true within it self,
>   And all the world can never wrong her state.
>   . . .
>   If England's peers and people join in one,
>   Nor Pope, nor France, nor Spain can do them wrong.
>   *2 Troublesome Reign* 43-46, 53-54

Bastard:
>   This England never did, nor never shall
>   Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
>   But when it first did help to wound itself.
>   Now these her princes are come home again,
>   Come the three corners of the world in arms,
>   And we shall shock them. Naught shall make us rue,
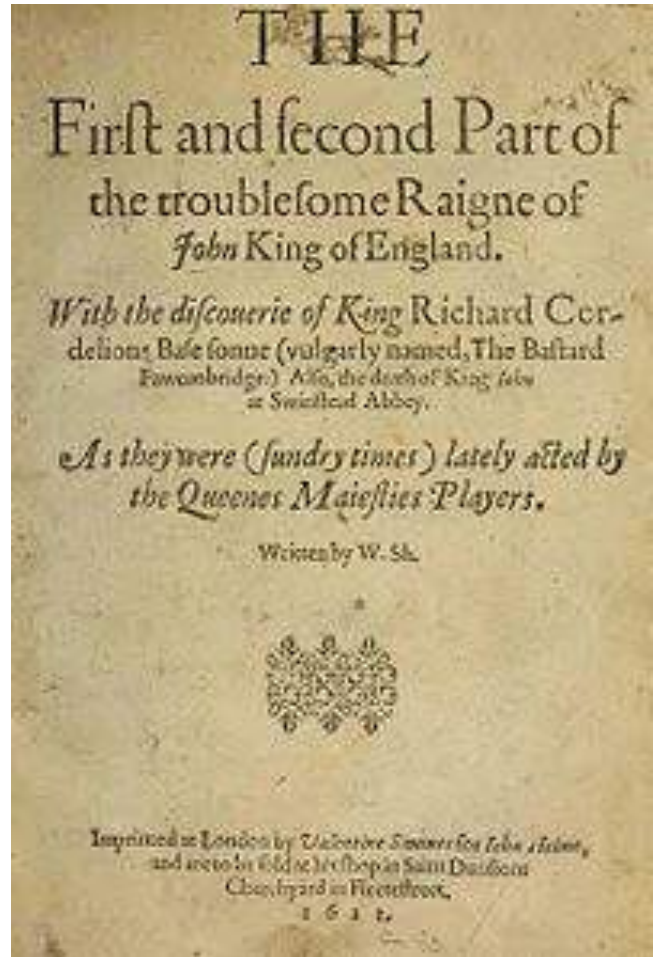>   If England to itself do rest but true.
>   *King John* V.vii.112-118

In both plays Faulconbridge's magnetic personality, and his blunt and impudent observations mark him as the play's key character. In the words of Harold Bloom, "Faulconbridge . . . is the first character in Shakespeare who fully can charm and arouse us, particularly because no one before in a Shakespearean play is so persuasive a representation of a person. It is not too much to say that the Bastard in *King John* inaugurates Shakespeare's invention of the human."[7] With this startling remark, Bloom declares that Shakespeare was the first writer to portray the full range of the human personality, and that the Bastard Faulconbridge was the first literary character to think, speak and act like a genuine human being.[8] Besides this, the Faulconbridge in both plays is a model of character and behavior, and the soul of wit. In both plays the dramatist portrays him as a mediator and a leader, as brave, clever, loyal and patriotic.

Considering that in 1563 Oxford's half-sister Katherine petitioned to have him declared illegitimate, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the Bastard Faulconbridge in *Troublesome Reign* was his first portrait of himself.[9] It appears that Oxford inserted into his first version of *King John* a young man accused of illegitimacy who, after denying it, proudly embraces the fact that his actual father was the king. The young man impresses King John to such an extent that he becomes his most competent and trusted courtier. In his revision of the play, Oxford retained and refined the character and assigned him the same role.

This conclusion—that the playwright is portraying himself in Faulconbridge—has been advanced by several orthodox scholars. As Harold Goddard expressed it, "Over and over, Faulconbridge gives the impression of seeing eye to eye with his creator. . . . I can never, when I read the lines, escape the conviction that they come straight from Shakespeare's heart."[10] In his edition of *King John*, A. R. Braunmuller remarks that the Bastard is Shakespeare's "representative."[11] One comment about Faulconbridge seems especially appropriate to Oxford: "Because he is truly royal he rises superior to everything in the play except truth itself."[12]

THE
First and second Part of
the troublesome Raigne of
John King of England.

With the discouerie of King Richard Cordelions Base sonne (vulgarly named, The Bastard Fawconbridge:) Also, the death of King John at Swinstead Abbey.

As they were (sundry times) lately acted by
the Queenes Maiesties Players.

Written by W. Sh.

Imprinted at London by Valentine Simmes for Iohn Helme, and are to be fould at his shop in Saint Dunstans Church yard in Fleetstreet.
1611.

This identification with Oxford is further supported by the Bastard's remark about his origin: "And I am I, howe'er I was begot" (*King John* I.i.175). This particular sentiment and phrase is echoed twice again by Oxford— in a letter to Lord Burghley in 1584: "I serve her Majesty, and I am that I am . . ." and in Sonnet 121: "No, I am that I am, and they that level/ At my abuses reckon up their own." As with the other five characters in this group, Faulconbridge is an unhistorical and fictional character whose particular personality and behavior Shakespeare adopted and reused in his later play, without even changing his name.

To sum up, each of our six characters originated in one of three anonymous plays, each of which is generally acknowledged as a major source for one or more canonical plays. This suggests one of two things.

Either Shakespeare deliberately appropriated and reused characters that he found in these anonymous plays (in three cases carrying the same name into his own play) or he is the unnamed author of the earlier plays.

The substantial evidence that each of them is the work of a very young Oxford/Shakespeare can be found in several of my previously published papers. The facts presented above are further evidence of this. Orthodox scholars tell us that these plays were written by other playwrights, but for the most part they are unable to identify them. And they have been routinely omitted from collections of Shakespeare apocrypha, most notably from the recent Royal Shakespeare Company's *William Shakespeare & Others*. In light of the evidence detailed above, they all bear serious re-examination and inclusion in a category of Shakespearean juvenilia. What explanation can there be for Shakespeare's wholesale appropriation of these six characters other than that he was their original creator?

1. Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) IV, 167-168; Giorgio Melchiori, ed. *The Second Part of King Henry IV* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 11; Rene Weis, ed. *Henry IV, Part 2* (Oxford: OUP, 1997), 16.

2. E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare, Facts and Problems* (Oxford: OUP, 1930) I, 380-381.

3. Quotations from the Shakespeare canon are from G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin, eds. *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2nd ed. 1997).

4. This close relationship was first suggested by James Monaghan in "Falstaff and His Forebears," *Studies in Philology*. v. 18 (1922), 353-361.

5. Quotations from *Famous Victories* are from Seymour M. Pitcher, *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship of* The Famous Victories (New York: SUNY, 1961).

6. Jan Harold Brunvand, "The Folktale Origin of The Taming of the Shrew," *Shakespeare Quarterly*. v. 17:4 (1966), 345-359.

7. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), 52.

8. In the orthodox chronology, *King John* is considered to be Shakespeare's twelfth or thirteenth play (Chambers, *William Shakespeare, Facts and Problems* I, 248, 270).

9. Her claim was that Oxford's father, the sixteenth Earl, was married to another woman at the time that he married Oxford's mother. An annulment would have resulted in Oxford's illegitimacy, and his loss of the earldom. The outcome of the petition is unknown, but Oxford retained his title and his property.

10. Harold Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Chicago: UCP, 1951) I, 62.

11. A. R. Braunmuller, ed. *King John* (Oxford: OUP, 1989), 72, 77.

12. F. W. Brownlow, *Two Shakespearean Sequences* (Pittsburgh:UPP, 1977), 82.

Answering the Riddle

In the summer issue of the Newsletter we posed two riddles. The first was:

Q. How many Stratfordians does it take to change a light bulb?
A. None, because to them the bulb doesn't need changing.

The second was:
Q. How many Oxfordians does it take to change a light bulb?

We invited readers to submit answers, and—after some pleading—finally got a few responses:

A. For a dim-watt it will take only one Oxfordian; however for a dim-wit it will take all the Oxfordians, 10 Geneva Bibles, 6 *Polimanteia*s, all the Queen's horses and all the King's Men. [Margaret Becker]

A. Du kannst dir das nicht vorstellen, du warst nicht dabei (a rough translation is: "You had to be there"). [Hanno Wember]

A. Two—one to replace the bulb and one to beat back Stratfordians who prefer to remain in the dark. [Kathryn Sharpe]

A. Just one, but someone else will get the credit for it. [A Never Writer]

Reply to Morse's Critique of the *Sonnets* Dedication Puzzle

by Robert Prechter

In a presentation at the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference in April 2014, Michael Morse criticized my article (Prechter, 2005, Parts 1 and 2) on the *Sonnets* dedication along with others' claims to have found hidden texts within larger texts (Morse, 2014). Morse denounced "fictive ontologies" leading to "the alleged onomastic encipherment of identity or authorially-ascriptive details within a particular text [containing] solecistic phrasing, lapidary form and unusual orthography." He also referred derisively to "Prechter's fallacious leap" and "the speciousness of his claims," which he found to be "terminally flawed."

In his report of the SAS Conference in the Spring 2014 *Newsletter*, Howard Schumann gave significant coverage to Morse's speech, so many Oxfordians are by now aware of it. While the Oxfordian movement does need a careful critique of hidden-text, hidden-math and hidden-image claims, Morse's isn't it.

On the Record as a Code Skeptic

I have long displayed my skeptic's credentials, not only as an erstwhile subscriber to *Skeptic* magazine but specifically as an authorship code skeptic. In a 2010 paper (Prechter, 2010) I analyzed B.M. Ward's discernment of Edward de Vere's name supposedly hidden within a poem in *A Hundreth sundry Flowres* by George Gascoigne. Ward had 69 poems from which to choose, hundreds of letters in each poem, an inconsistent decoding approach even within his chosen poem, and a tortured construct that seemed purposely designed to produce the answer he wanted. Within this context, I also showed that other complex solutions to Ward's specific instructions are available. In this case, the additional point is valid, because the evidence indicated that Ward manufactured his answer. I concluded, "There is no special anagram and no case whatsoever that Oxford's name is deliberately embedded in the poem" (Prechter 2010, p. 56).

So, as a code skeptic, why would I write an article on embedded names within the dedication of *Shake-speares Sonnets*? The answer, as argued therein, is that a positive conclusion in that case is statistically warranted.

A Fundamental Error

Morse's technique is simple. He performs data mining on a block of text and asserts that doing so negates the author's work. But his demonstration is insufficient for debunking anything. Just because *he* uses data mining doesn't mean the author did. To succeed, he must show that the *claimer* data mined, as I did in 2010 with respect to Ward.

Pulling random artifacts from text using the method offered in my article is indeed easy. As Morse neglected to mention, however, *I said so*. My article reads, "We can even use the Dedication Puzzle to concoct 'messages' such as 'this is all wrong.' Any string of letters can provide the spelling for many things." (Prechter, 2005, Part 2, p. 20) The design of Morse's attack on my work is not original with him; it is original with me. I brought up this anticipated objection in order to dismiss it as irrelevant.

The definitive question relating to my method is not, "How many words and phrases can you concoct from a text?" The proper question is, "If you choose a text, what is the probability that the key names relating to Shakespeare's Sonnets will appear?" or, "What is the probability that pre-identified letter combinations *relating to the text* will appear?" The chances of either outcome are low, as I explained in the original article.

Contrary to Morse's assertion, the Dedication Puzzle's solutions have a substantial degree of exclusivity. All of them take the same form: a full proper name, correctly spelled, in the same direction as the text. His demonstration, on the other hand, extracts names, places, phrases, clauses and pairings; uses *and* and *the*, which are common in texts; and resorts to using 'U' for 'V' and 'V' for 'U' to make the spellings work out. Although his audience seemed impressed that he could derive "Owl Roo Tigger and Eeyore" from the dedication text, few seem to have recognized what a cheat this is. An embedded name has only one rendition. But four separate, short words (leaving "and" in its place) have six orders of expression (*abcd, abdc, acbd, acdb, adbc, adcb*). Searching until you find one out of six letter groupings isn't that hard. It would be as if he were to allow "ryw hen hesley riot" as one of half a dozen renditions of "Henry Wriothesley." Morse says it's easy to find solutions; it certainly is if you go about it like this.

In short, Morse confuses random coincidence with specific coincidence. Consider this analogy: If you were to travel with a friend to a faraway country, and one day you ran into one of his cousins, he might exclaim that the odds against such an event are astronomically high. But actually the probability of *some* coincidence occurring at *any* unspecified time in one's life is so high as to make any single occurrence quite usual. On the other hand, if the same friend had said to you that morning, "I think we will run into one of my cousins today," and you do, well, that outcome would have a very low probability absent special knowledge on the part of your friend. In fact, you would be justified in suspecting special knowledge. Morse says we're dealing with the former situation, but in my case we're dealing with the latter. The *Sonnets* dedication in essence said, "We are going to run into a bevy of my cousins today," and we did.

The Original Results

Using the method described in my article, the *Sonnets* dedication yields names many scholars would expect to find if the author of the text had wished to embed secret

information about the subject at hand. Key names embedded include Henry Wriothesley (widely identified as the Youth of the *Sonnets*), Emilia Bassana (the Dark Lady, according to some Stratfordians and Oxfordians), William Herbert and Philip Herbert (the "grand possessors" of Shakespeare's work, and William as the Youth according to some scholars), Edward Vere (the author) and Elisabeth (the Dark Lady, according to some Oxfordians), whose name is rendered beginning at every one of the 23 *E*'s in the dedication. The Dedication contains *all* the names of the people most widely suspected to be involved, with no key name omitted.

It does not matter that one of these names, or other names, might show up by chance. The positive result of producing all the key names is still highly statistically significant.

Morse charges that the Puzzle's solutions derive from a "non-exclusive" methodology, which is true, but he says so as if that closes the case. *Non-exclusive* is not a synonym for *unbounded*. People who allow tortured syntax in their solutions, such as "THIS VER ME DECLAR BE SHSP," do open the door to criticism, since they have implied that their approach is virtually unbounded. Non-exclusivity *per se*, on the other hand, is insufficient to negate a puzzle's existence. It is not my fault that we are not dealing with a code. While non-exclusivity means that we cannot be *absolutely certain* that the results are due to deliberate design, we may nevertheless be *highly confident* that they are.

One of Morse's claims about my method is that "the absence of any equidistant or patterned spacing in the selection of letters *opens the linguistic floodgate* and *ruins* any legitimate claims for the puzzle's exclusivity" (Morse, 2014, and Schumann, 2014, p. 25; emphasis added). Yet Morse's criteria are arbitrary, and his conclusion is irrelevant, since I specifically disclaimed solution exclusivity. His statement has no point unless it is to imply that his unmet criteria somehow ruin my claim that the solutions are *meaningful*. A brief test will show how wrong this is.

Test It

The method: In a pre-chosen 143-letter text, locate all instances of the starting letter of a pre-chosen name and, from any of them, see if you can spell the name by moving through the letters in their normal sequence until you return to your starting point. See how many names from a pre-chosen list you can spell out.

Morse scored points with his audience by using mockery in deriving names related to *Winnie-the-Pooh*. So let's use A. A. Milne's classic children's book for a test.

Find the first preface or chapter within *Winnie-the-Pooh* in which the author does not actually name the book's key players within the first 143 letters. Seek in that text just three *Sonnets* names: Henry Wriothesley (16

letters), William Herbert (14 letters) and (as Simon Forman spelled it, presumably at her direction) Emilia Bassana (13 letters). Keep in mind that you are using a method that supposedly "opens the floodgates" to solutions. I doubt you will succeed.

Alternatively, seek within this same block of text just three names of similar length that are most related to the text in question. The equivalent, textually related names in *Winnie-the-Pooh* are: Christopher Robin (16 letters), Winnie the Pooh (13 letters) and Alexander Milne (14 letters). Realize that the second name is relatively easy to find since it contains the word *the*, which appears in many short texts. I still predict you will fail.

Let's really open those supposed floodgates. Run both tests on the qualified text in each of Milne's three other books: *The House at Pooh Corner*, *When We Were Very Young* and *Now We Are Six*. I suspect you will die of thirst before finding either set of names in any of the chosen texts.

Finally, choose in advance any 143-letter block of text in the whole world, and look for the three *Sonnets* names. Then look for three pre-chosen names of equivalent length *relating to that text*. I won't bother to ask if you succeeded.

The reason you can't find these names easily is that Morse's critique is invalid. You are not data mining as he was; you are applying the method I used in the Dedication Puzzle. Anyone can data mine many texts and come up with, say, names of Bible characters or messages relating to World War II. But one cannot routinely make a list of 13- to 16-letter solutions in advance and then find all of them in a pre-chosen text. Yet that's what the *Sonnets* dedication allows us to do.

One could also undertake an extensive search and locate some other text that contains the *Sonnets* names or pre-identified, equal-length names pertinent to the text. But this would be just another form of data mining.

For all the entertaining "solutions" Morse found in the Dedication, he neglected to mention that he failed to find the second most important name in *Winnie-the-Pooh*, namely Christopher Robin. This is because the chances of succeeding by the method are small even when you are blatantly engaged in data mining.

In statistics, a *p*-value of 0.05 or less implies significance, and a *p*-value of 0.01 indicates a highly significant result. From a calculation in my article, finding just the three noted *Sonnets* names in the Dedication has a *p*-value less than 0.001. The *Sonnets* dedication yields at least *five* directly related names and omits no important name. Per my study, the probability of finding these five names were they not deliberately embedded in the Dedication is 1 in 33,500. Even if this estimate were shown to be ten times too high, our *p*-value is still better than 0.001. The Dedication Puzzle result is, by statistical standards, *non-random*. The null hypothesis—that there is no deliberate embedding—is rejected.

More Evidence of Purpose

My article demonstrated that the practice of hiding names in like manner shows up in at least two other related texts, one by the very publisher of the *Sonnets*, Thomas Thorpe, the other by the author of the text on the Stratford Monument, which yields the name "Edward de Vere" in a unique and highly exclusive way. Alexander Waugh (2014) identified the Latin text on the Monument as referring to Francis Beaumont, Geoffrey Chaucer and Edmund Spenser, yet none of these names appears in that way even once; nor does William Shaksper, despite the last name ("Shakspeare") having been placed within the text. These and other points noted in the article suggest deliberate purpose and a related method behind all three of these results.

More Charges

Morse makes at least three additional charges, all erroneous. First, he says I "summarily dismiss" or "throw out" certain names found in the text. What I actually did was to suggest William Hall and Roger Manners as possible artifacts among the solutions. But the names are obviously *there*; they haven't been *thrown out*. Some people believe that they do pertain.

Second, he says that I am being "logically unsound" in saying that if the puzzle is real we can dismiss all proposed candidates for *Sonnets* relevance whose names do not appear among its solutions. But this line of reasoning is perfectly logical and consistent with my case. In that vein, I showed that omitted names (e.g., Anne Vavasor) are in fact terrible candidates. These aren't problems but instances of cross-validation. Morse neglects to offer any person whose name is *not* embedded in the text as the true Youth, Dark Lady, grand possessor or author. I doubt he will, because the good names are all there, and any missing alternatives really are bad candidates.

Finally, aiming to neuter my finding that all 23 *E*'s in the Dedication text lead to a solution of "Elisabeth," he commented, "the letter 'e' is the most frequently occurring letter in the English language, both in modern corpora and in those from the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods. If Prechter's fallacious leap doesn't beg the question here, surely nothing does." But the number of *e*'s in the English language—then or now—is irrelevant. It's what *follows* each *E* in the Dedication that matters. It is not easy to find 143-letter texts in which Elisabeth is spelled by our method from every *e* (see test results below). The plethora of *E*'s in the Dedication, then, serves to *raise* the number of successful solutions and therefore *lower* the probability that they are there by chance. By Morse's own equation, nothing I said begs the question.

Perspective

Let's get some perspective here. I offered my hypothesis in an article for a newsletter, not in a paper for a journal. I believe the newsletter forum to be appropriate for highly speculative treatments and for certain topics, such as those which might trigger Oxfordians' justified paranoia about looking like Delia Bacon. Yet I think it's fair to say that the care taken in my article is high compared to that in other Shakespeare-authorship hidden-text/math/image arguments. I even solicited the help of an independent statistician and included his supporting comments in the article, so readers would not have to rely only on my assessment.

Even so, were I to rewrite my article of a decade ago I'm sure I could improve on it. I included too much of my thinking process, making it longer than it needed to be. I think I could test more precisely the degree of statistical significance.

In finance, where I work, one of the biggest pitfalls of quantitative analysis is data mining without realizing it. Many computer programmers purport to have conducted research that will produce market-trading riches, but they fail to work because back data were simply mined. Their work is the equivalent of finding "Winnie the Pooh" in the Sonnets dedication and claiming it carries as much weight as valid results.

Contrary to popular belief, seeing patterns where they aren't is no more common than failing to see patterns where they are. Humans examined nature for thousands of years, but it wasn't until 1982 that Benoit Mandelbrot demonstrated that natural forms are patterned as fractals. Just because you don't discern a pattern doesn't mean it isn't there. That's where statistical analysis can help.

Human skepticism is a good thing, but sometimes it gets in the way of believing good data. Many court cases are won on strong circumstantial evidence. That's what we have in the Dedication Puzzle: circumstantial evidence—not beyond all doubt, but beyond *reasonable* doubt.

The Oxfordian theory will surely not stand or fall on this or that circumstance, much less on the probability of hidden text. I consider my article to be less mainstream than the journal papers I have written. But every brick helps build the case.

Postscript: Test Results

Per the prescription above, let's check the first 143 letters of each qualifying block of text within Milne's four books. As it happens, they begin chapter 3 of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, chapter 5 of *The House at Pooh Corner*, the preface to *When We Were Very Young* and the introduction to *Now We Are Six*. We find that *not one* of these passages contains all three key names from the *Sonnets*; and *not one* of them contains all three key players within the Pooh books, either. That's eight tests, all failures.

The failures, moreover, are dismal. Among the three *Sonnets* names—Henry Wriothesley, William Herbert and Emilia Bassana—the number of names found in each of the four texts is 0, 0, 0 and 0. Not one of the names shows up (and the third text even has the name "William" right in it). Such low outcomes are due to randomness *absent* deliberate embedding. So much for floodgates.

Among the three *Pooh* names—Christopher Robin, Winnie the Pooh and Alexander Milne—the number of names in each of the four texts is as follows: 1, 1, 1 and 1.

The only name that shows up at all is Winnie the Pooh, an outcome we fully expected. In how many of these texts can we spell Elisabeth from every *e*? Answer: *zero*. One can always data mine. But one cannot pull *specific* nuggets out of the mine unless it's been seeded. Morse derided my article for finding "a litany of" names suspected to be related to the *Sonnets*. But as these brief tests show, the real problem is finding enough of them. That "litany" is yet more evidence that the puzzle is a deliberate construct.

The Twelve Individual Test Results

(*Winnie the Pooh*) THE PIGLET LIVED IN A VERY GRAND HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF A BEECH TREE AND THE BEECH TREE <u>WAS</u> IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOREST AND THE PIGLET LIVED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HOUSE NEXT TO HIS HO

    Test 1: 0 out of 3 Sonnets names
    Test 2: 1 out of 3 Pooh names (<u>W</u>innie the Pooh)
    Test 3: Elisabeth: 9 fails out of 28

(*The House at Pooh Corner*) IT <u>WAS</u> GOING TO BE ONE OF RABBITS BUSY DAYS AS SOON AS HE WOKE UP HE FELT IMPORTANT AS IF EVERYTHING DEPENDED UPON HIM IT WAS JUST THE DAY FOR ORGANIZING SOMETHING OR FOR WRITING

    Test 1: 0 out of 3 Sonnets names
    Test 2: 1 out of 3 Pooh names (<u>W</u>innie the Pooh)
    Test 3: Elisabeth: 9 fails out of 13

(*When We Were Very Young*) AT ONE TIME BUT I HAVE CHANGED MY MIND NOW I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO WRITE A LITTLE NOTE AT THE TOP OF EACH OF THESE POEMS IN THE MANNER OF MR <u>W</u>ILLIAM WORDSWORTH WHO LIKED TO TELL HIS

    Test 1: 0 out of 3 Sonnets names
    Test 2: 1 out of 3 Pooh names (<u>W</u>innie the Pooh)
    Test 3: Elisabeth: 4 fails out of 16

(*Now We Are Six*) WHEN YOU ARE RECITING POETRY WHICH IS A THING <u>WE</u> NEVER DO YOU FIND SOMETIMES JUST AS YOU ARE BEGINNING THAT UNCLE JOHN IS STILL TELLING AUNT ROSE THAT IF HE CANT FIND HIS SPECTA

    Test 1: 0 out of 3 Sonnets names
    Test 2: 1 out of 3 Pooh names (<u>W</u>innie the Pooh)
    Test 3: Elisabeth: 14 fails out of 16

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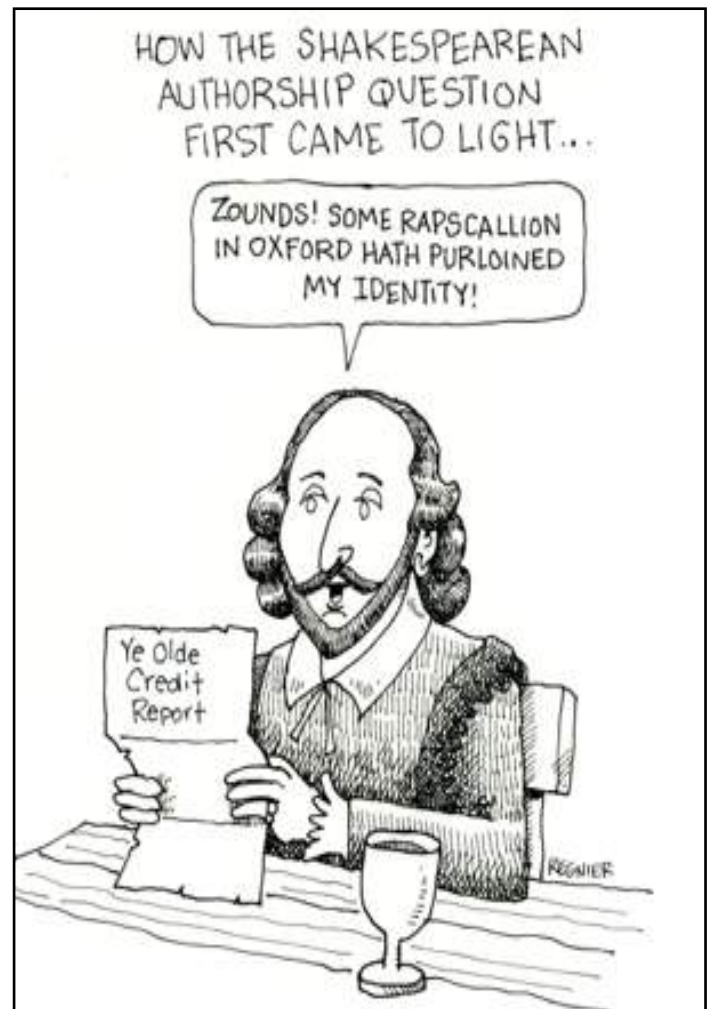
Cartoon by John Regnier

DNA Testing of Richard III's Remains Raises Some Questions

by Bill Boyle

When a skeleton believed to be the remains of King Richard III was unearthed in September 2012 in a parking lot in central England, it was headline news, and the culmination of years of efforts to figure out where the "possibly" infamous king's remains were buried. Initial reports indicated that there were reasons to believe this was Richard. Obvious facts that the skeleton revealed included a slight deformity (scoliosis of the spine), and clear signs of injuries, indicating an unnatural death, most likely in the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, as history had recorded. The Leicester parking lot where the remains were found was next to the former site of Greyfriars Abbey, where Richard was always said to have been interred, but its exact location had become lost over the centuries. The identification was made official in February 2013, after analysis that included the use of mitochondrial DNA. The search for Richard's remains had been advocated for years by the Richard III Society (a group dedicated to clearing the monarch's name from historical slander), and the actual discovery of the remains was a triumph.

But the story of the search for Richard's remains is also one of the search for truth about Richard III (was he a benevolent, fair leader or a Machiavellian monster?). It has always had some interest for the Oxfordian community since it touches on several issues that relate to the authorship debate. Was he truly deformed in any way, or did Shakespeare—like others in the 16th century before him—invent the gross deformity as part of a Tudor propaganda campaign to slander Richard as having deserved to be overthrown, thus promoting the idea of the "rightness" of the accession of Henry Tudor (founder of the Tudor dynasty) to the throne through conquest. Another important part of this "truth of history" battle was how Shakespeare's *Richard III* provided an answer to the historical fact of the disappearance (and probable death) of the boy princes (Edward and Richard, Duke of York, sons of King Edward IV [1442-1483]; Parliament disinherited them in 1483 by declaring them illegitimate, and awarded the throne to Edward IV's brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester). In Shakespeare's *Richard III* King Richard orders their murders, which further adds to his reputation as a monster. There is no direct evidence of what actually happened to the boys, or when. But both boys still had better blood claims to the throne than Henry Tudor, and their disappearance was a very convenient circumstance for him. With the princes gone there could be no challenge to his accession and reign.

In any event, all of this "propaganda vs. history" naturally leads straight to the larger issue of the truth of history, which in turn plays right into the anti-Stratfordian debate, and its questioning the truth of the history that has been handed down to us about Shakespeare. The founding and mission of the Richard III Society had been to debunk the slanderous stories about Richard (the gross deformity, his conduct as king, the murder of the princes), and to restore him to his rightful place in history. Such a mission is not unlike those of organizations dedicated to securing the true history of who wrote Shakespeare, and to restore the true Shakespeare to his rightful place in history.

Once the remains were confirmed to be Richard's the issue of historical truth became part of the story. As CNN reported on its website in February 2013:

> Supporters of the infamous king, including members of the Richard III Society, hope the discovery will now force academics to re-examine history, which they say has been tainted by exaggerations and false claims about Richard III since the Tudor era. Screenwriter Philippa Langley, who championed the search for several years, told CNN she wanted "the establishment to look again at his story," saying she wanted to uncover the truth about "the real Richard, before the Tudor writers got to him.
> "This has been an extraordinary journey of discovery," Langley said. "We came with a dream and today that dream has been realized. This is an historic moment that will rewrite the history books."

But before a first rewrite could even begin, the story changed again, in a most interesting way.

In December 2014 there was a new announcement resulting from further DNA testing; the results were more dramatic than simply confirming that the remains were Richard's. The new results revealed that the entire line of succession leading up to the Tudors might itself have been corrupted centuries earlier by marital infidelity (and the resulting illegitimate—i.e., bastard—births), so that the royal bloodlines emanating from Edward III (ruled 1327-1377) were not continuous, thus throwing into question the entire notion of the "right of blood" for royal succession.

Here is the issue summed up (from a BBC News website article, December 2, 2014):

> Richard III and his royal rival, Henry Tudor (later Henry VII), were both descendants of King Edward III. The infidelity could, in theory, have occurred either on the branch leading back from Henry to Edward or on the branch leading from Richard to Edward. Henry's ancestor John of Gaunt was plagued by rumours of illegitimacy throughout his life, apparently prompted by the absence of Edward III at his birth. He was reportedly enraged by gossip suggesting he was the son of a Flemish butcher. "Hypothetically speaking, if John of Gaunt wasn't

Ashland Shakespeare Authorship Conference: September 24-27, 2015

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship (SOF) will hold its 2015 annual conference and membership meeting at the historic landmark Ashland Springs Hotel in Ashland, OR, home of the Tony Award-winning Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF). From Thursday, September 24, through Sunday, September 27, the conference will convene daily with evening productions at the festival. Appetizers at the opening reception, two buffet lunches and an awards banquet are included in the program. Registration for the conference is now available on the SOF website: www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.

The goal of SOF conferences is to address specific challenges in the Shakespeare authorship debate. This year, papers are being solicited that engage with the Shakespeare plays in production during our program (see below). The Call for Papers has been posted on the SOF website and other forums.

This year's conference will feature a number of British scholars who are actively engaged in the authorship debate, including Kevin Gilvary (Chairman of the De Vere Society), Alexander Waugh (Honorary President of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition), Dr. Ros Barber and Julia Cleave (Trustees of the Shakespearean Authorship Trust) and Dr. Heward Wilkinson. In addition, Professors Roger Stritmatter, Michael Delahoyde, Don Rubin and Wally Hurst, authors Mark Anderson and Katherine Chiljan, and editor James Warren have all proposed papers for what promises to be an outstanding educational and theatrical program.

The conference will commence early on Thursday, September 24, with a tour of the Margery Bailey Collection at Hannon Library and an exhibit of its valuable folio editions, which include several Shakespeare Folios, Hall's *Chronicle* (1550), Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1587), *The Works of Ben Jonson* (1616), *The Beaumont and Fletcher Folio* (1679), Raleigh's *Historie of the World* (1652), Camden's *Britannia* (1695) and North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (1631).

One hundred tickets each for evening productions of *Much Ado about Nothing* (Sept. 24), *Antony and Cleopatra* (Sept. 25) and *Pericles* (Sept. 26) have been reserved for our conference group. The discounted SOF Conference package of three tickets (one for each play) is $100, but will be available only on a first-come-first-serve basis. Group-discounted individual play tickets may also be purchased for $40 each. Online group ticket orders for the OSF performances will close when each show sells out, which is very likely in the case of *Pericles*, and no later than August 20.

For the complete program of Oregon Shakespeare Festival productions go to: https://osfashland.org/. The fall program of plays also includes *Guys and Dolls*, *Long Day's Journey into Night, The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land, Sweat, The Happiest Song Plays Last* and *Head Over Heels*.

Discounted group rates of $139-$169/night for rooms at the Ashland Springs Hotel as well as the Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites will be available for conference attendees. Call 541-488-1700 or go to http://www.ashlandspringshotel.com/ for reservations. The Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites is located at the south end of town, but has a regular shuttle service to the Ashland Springs Hotel and the OSF theaters downtown. For other choices of accommodations, see the 'Planning Your Trip' option on the OSF website: https://www.osfashland.org/en/plan-your-visit/visitor-info/accommodations.aspx.

This year is the 80th anniversary of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the third Ashland Shakespeare authorship conference to take place over the past decade. As nearly 100 participants attended the 2005 and 2010 authorship conferences, early registration and OSF ticket orders are recommended. For additional information, contact Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net.

Edward III's son, it would have meant that (his son) Henry IV had no legitimate claim to the throne, nor Henry V, nor Henry VI," said Dr. Schurer.

As most Oxfordians know, talk of DNA testing to resolve an issue has been around almost as long as DNA testing itself. Many Oxfordians would love to get at the truth about the Virgin Queen Elizabeth, and the question of whether she ever had any children, and, if so, whether any of them could have been Edward de Vere or Henry Wriotheseley.

Ironically, I had been on the phone just one day before these latest DNA findings were announced, talking about all things Oxfordian, including our own "little princes" problem, and the question of DNA came up. I said, "Sure, bring it on. I'd love to see the results."

I stand by that. This Richard III DNA story only whets my appetite. When one considers that "rumours of illegitimacy" in the royal bloodline (i.e., John of Gaunt, as noted in the BBC story) had been in the history books for centuries, and, after hundreds of years such illegitimacy is scientifically confirmed, one can only wonder what might happen next in our very own authorship story. Consider further that in the debates in the 1590s over the succession to Elizabeth, the matter of descent from John of Gaunt often pops up. And it was a Parliamentary "finding" of illegitimacy that deprived young Prince Edward of the

throne in 1483, and awarded it instead to his uncle Richard.

So, what is the truth? What is the evidence of that truth? If it were to turn out that one factor in the Elizabethan succession was illegitimacy in the royal line of succession during her reign, that would be a huge story, maybe one worth covering up forever. If DNA testing of descendants of Elizabethan era figures would settle the succession debate (and maybe along with it the Shakespeare authorship debate), then bring it on.

The Stratford Festival's "Authorship Appeal": Another view, and the SAC's "full-blown trial"

by John Shahan

This is a response to Alex McNeil's article, "'Authorship Appeal' Held at Stratford, Ontario," in the last issue of the *Newsletter* (Fall 2014; Vol. 50, No. 4, 8-10). I concur with most of his account of the trial, and I agree that Professor Don Rubin deserves a lot of credit for assisting Festival Trustee Guy Pratte in keeping it from becoming the fiasco for Oxfordians that some Festival people clearly intended it to be. But I would also like to recap some of what went on leading up to the trial and then comment on the news that Rubin and Pratte are discussing the possibility of the Stratford Festival hosting a "full-blown trial—along the lines proposed by John Shahan and the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition—in 2016." I do have views on that.

When I first noticed the announcement on the Festival's website that it had scheduled a trial in which the Chief Justice of Canada would convene a panel of judges "to consider whether there is sufficient evidence to refute the claim that Shakespeare was the principal author of the canon" with "special appearances" by artistic director Antoni Cimolino and actor Colm Feore, red flags went up. I knew that Antoni Cimolino was a staunch Stratfordian; what about Feore? It was then July 14, and

the trial was to be held on October 4. Why had I not heard about such an important trial sooner? Had any doubters been consulted? Who would be representing us?

Just the previous year, my organization, the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC), had (1) challenged the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon (SBT) to a mock trial of its claim that it is "beyond doubt" that the Stratford man was the author William Shakespeare, and (2) offered to donate £40,000 to the SBT if it succeeded in proving its case in such a trial. The SBT had refused to participate, but the offer was still on the table, still an embarrassment. Was the SBT attempting an "end run" around us by getting the Festival to host a trial in which the Chief Justice ruled in their favor so they could say that the trial had already been held, and we lost? I knew that Stanley Wells, honorary president of the SBT, had visited the Festival the previous year, and a team including Paul Edmondson would be visiting soon—more red flags.

It occurred to me that Don Rubin, who knew people at the Festival, would either know about it or could probably find out. I called it to his attention and learned that he, too, knew nothing. He inquired, and the reply was

not reassuring. No, there was no doubter input and no doubter would be involved, but that was okay because it would be just a "light-hearted entertainment." Light-hearted for whom? For them? Easy for them to say when it wasn't their ox being gored.

This confirmed that the Festival was up to no good. I decided to bump it up to a higher level. The Chief Justice of Canada was presumably an honest, intelligent, fair-minded person, so I drafted a letter explaining the history of the SAC's mock trial challenge and donation offer and expressing my concerns about the Festival's proposed trial. Here's an abbreviated list of what I cited in the letter:

1. The trial is being planned without consulting, or even informing, a principal party to the dispute—Shakespeare authorship doubters—and no doubter has been invited to participate.

2. Doubters have made a great deal of progress in recent years, and anyone who is not fully familiar with all of the new evidence and arguments can't possibly represent us adequately.

3. Even for someone familiar with the evidence, it is not possible to cover it in ninety minutes, much less to present both sides and have enough time for cross-examinations and rebuttals.

4. The way the issue is framed ("whether there is sufficient evidence to refute the claim that Shakespeare was the principal author of the canon") places the burden of proof on doubters. This might make sense if the issue was whether to replace Shakspere with another claimant, but that isn't the issue here. The SBT says it is "beyond doubt" that Shakspere was the author, and they use this to delegitimize, stigmatize, and suppress the issue to keep it a taboo subject. Since a valued tradition in Western cultures favors freedom of inquiry, and the SBT seeks an exception to that tradition, the burden should be on them to prove their claim "beyond doubt."

I then wrote that, since the SBT had declined, I would extend the same mock trial challenge and donation offer to the Festival. I proposed that the trial be held in the fall of 2015, adding:

"This offer depends on the Festival modifying the format for the 'Authorship Appeal' event. What I propose is that it be in the format of a 'preliminary hearing' to determine whether to proceed to trial, with a panel of neutral, unbiased judges ruling on whether enough evidence has been presented by each side to warrant an in-depth proceeding—the proposed mock trial."

After seeking comments, on July 19 I sent it to Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin along with copies of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt and our book, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?,* with copies to Festival Executive Director Anita Gaffney and Artistic Director Cimolino. On July 21, I formally extended the mock trial

challenge and £40,000 donation offer to the Festival in a letter to Festival Chairman Chip Vallis, with copies to Gaffney, Cimolino, and attorney Guy Pratte, the Festival trustee who I now knew was the sponsor of the Authorship Appeal.

On August 1, I received a polite reply from Anita Gaffney declining my offer and saying that the Authorship Appeal was conceived as "an entertaining and thought-provoking glance at an intriguing controversy … that it wouldn't come to any conclusive findings, nor would it carry any legal weight or academic authority," but they hoped it would "provoke lively discussion." She said they were consulting with Don Rubin and his information would be shared with the lawyers. That was progress, and I felt we had made our point, so I was not inclined to pursue it further.

Then I learned that, contrary to the way it was described on their website, the trial would be about who was the better candidate: Shakspere of Stratford, or Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford? Yet no Oxfordian would be allowed to participate and represent the case for Oxford. Further, Festival employee David Prosser would be writing a script for a key part of the trial. Alexander Waugh pointed out that Prosser was a member of the "Oxfraud" online discussion group, which is devoted to destroying the Oxfordian authorship theory. Prosser once tweeted that he is "addicted to the pleasures of De Vere bashing," which he described as his "hobby."

So I replied to Ms. Gaffney, asking why there was no mention of Oxford in their description of the event, and why no Oxfordian would participate if the event was to be about Shakspere vs. Oxford. Regarding Prosser, I wrote "The involvement of a self-described De Vere basher in your trial, along with the exclusion of anyone qualified to represent Oxford, raises serious questions about the purposes of the event…. We should have the right to defend ourselves."

She replied, explaining that the format was still evolving and that one lawyer had suggested it "would be more effective to focus specifically on arguments for Edward de Vere's authorship rather than keeping it open to competing candidates as well." She saw no need to change the description on their website. She said nothing about Prosser. She ended with "I do appreciate your offer of help, but we … prefer to proceed along the lines that we have already planned."

The one part of Alex McNeil's account that I cannot agree with is where he says "both sides of the Shakespeare Authorship Question were fairly presented. As originally planned by the Stratford Festival organizers, the event was going to be a lighthearted treatment of the issue with no input from anti-Stratfordians…. that idea was scrapped in favor of a presentation much like a moot court." The only change I can see is that attorney Guy Pratte—the only one of eight participants to represent the doubter point of view—accepted input from Don Rubin.

The format didn't change, and they did "proceed along the lines [they had] already planned."

The clearest indication of this is Antoni Cimolino's guest appearance as William of Stratford. "Shakespeare" testified on his own behalf as an expert witness, and of course he wouldn't lie. So here was the Festival's own artistic director taking sides in front of a hometown crowd. Shakspere *never* claimed to have written the works. Cimolino, without offering any evidence, suggested otherwise; but, oh, in a lighthearted manner, of course. I am reminded of Hamlet's sarcastic remark to Claudius: "No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' the world." A fair and balanced trial would have had Keir Cutler appearing as Oxford, claiming *he* did it.

Pratte cross-examined Cimolino, but not Sheila Block, who presented the case for Shakspere. There was nothing "lighthearted" about her fourteen-minute presentation, and she attacked Oxford. Pratte then delivered an eloquent twelve-minute brief against Shakspere, with nothing on Oxford. That created confusion about whether the trial was supposed to pit Shakspere against Oxford. Pratte had been introduced as "the council for the Earl of Oxford," but he wisely ignored that. There wasn't enough time to cover the case for and against Shakspere, much less Oxford too.

Then it was the judges' turn. Four of the five gave what amounted to additional testimony for Shakspere, and with Guy Pratte having no opportunity to cross-examine or rebut any of them. The most egregious error was the casting of Cimolino's fellow actor, Colm Feore, as a judge. What nonsense! Feore was there to give testimony, based on no evidence at all, for Shakspere. He confidently said that the greatest writer in the English language did not care about writing. How he came by this knowledge he didn't say. As an actor, he just knew. Thanks, your honor.

As McNeil pointed out in his article, one judge worked for the same law firm as the attorney for Shakspere, while another had obviously written her comments in advance, before hearing any evidence. Two judges (Jackson and Gillese) cited the statute of limitations as a bar to any other claim. One would have thought it would have been made clear up front that this question of law was not at issue, and that they were there to rule on the relative strength of the evidence presented. They delivered no verdict, but if they had it would have been 4-0 for Shakspere, with Sharpe abstaining. Collectively, the five judges spoke for twenty-seven minutes, longer than Pratte and Block combined.

Most disappointing to me was Chief Justice McLachlin. She said nothing about Block's case *for* Shakspere, and her criticisms of the arguments *against* him were downright embarrassing. She clearly hadn't understood Pratte's point about the different spellings of the names of the author and the Stratford man, saying that someone had misspelled *her* name on the program. Pratte had made it clear, I thought, that there was a *consistent* difference in the two spellings.

Then she criticized an argument that Pratte didn't make, alleging that we say "the person who wrote these works could not have come from a small town with an ordinary grammar school." She complimented Pratte for his eloquence on that point, even though he had not said it at all. So where did it come from? The argument that doubters are motivated by snobbery—that we think people from humble origins cannot become great writers —is a false negative stereotype promoted by the SBT and repeated so much by Stratfordians that people just accept it as true. McLachlin was most likely prompted to set up this straw man argument and knock it down. She cited her own background, coming from a small town and rising to become chief justice, ignoring the fact that there's a detailed paper trail for her career, but nothing for Shakspere's.

She ignored points that Pratte did make, like the complete lack of records relating to a writing career, and the lack of any mention of the passing of the author when Shakspere died in 1616. Finally, as McNeil says, she placed the burden of proof on Mr. Pratte and authorship skeptics to rebut the presumption "based on centuries of erudition" that "Shakespeare" was the author. She found the evidence to be unclear, and so she ruled that the presumption was not rebutted. As promised, there was no formal verdict, but McLachlin made it very clear where she stood.

Doubters were not openly ridiculed, only indirectly, for being too dumb to know that names are sometimes misspelled, that people do rise from humble backgrounds to achieve greatness, and for being ignorant of statutes of limitations and bringing a case hundreds of years too late. Imagine what it would have been like if we hadn't been represented by a Festival trustee, and if we had not made it clear they were being watched, introducing a measure of accountability. The biggest plus was that 700 people attended, proving that there is great interest in the topic.

I'm very skeptical of the idea that the organization and individuals who staged this event are capable of hosting a serious mock trial of the authorship question in a fair and balanced way. As near as I can tell, Guy Pratte is the only Festival representative who took the issue seriously and spent any time examining the doubter point of view. I have no reason to doubt his intentions, but he is one man in an organization that is closely allied with the SBT, and is openly hostile to doubters, despite the fact that its founding artistic director, Tyrone Guthrie, was one of us.

As long as the Festival mistakenly believes that it has an interest in preserving the *status quo*, it is unlikely that it will approve any mock trial proposal that doesn't put us at a disadvantage.

SAC mock trial challenge

The SAC's challenge to the Birthplace Trust first appeared in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?,* and reads as follows:

> We hereby challenge the Birthplace Trust to prove its claim that it is beyond doubt that William Shakspere … wrote the works of William Shakespeare. We challenge them to do this in a quasi-judicial proceeding—a mock trial before an impartial panel of judges and jurors.... As the party claiming that the matter is beyond doubt, the Birthplace Trust should bear the burden of proving its claim, and should prove it "beyond a reasonable doubt."

We proposed a format in *SBD?*, but in the letter communicating the challenge to the SBT we wrote that "We are open to alternative formats, procedures and venues for the mock trial, as long as they are fair, they provide a valid test of the Birthplace Trust's claim, and both sides get ample opportunity for the presentation of evidence and cross-examination of witnesses."

That is our bottom line for what would constitute a trial along the lines proposed by the SAC. Anything else would be inconsistent with our challenge to the SBT and shouldn't be referred to as constituting the mock trial that we proposed and have long worked to try to bring about. I would also hope that the SAC would be consulted and involved in putting on any such trial.

Note that we did *not* propose a trial of Shakspere versus an alternative candidate, like Oxford. As an avid Oxfordian, I hope to see such a trial; but I think it would be premature at this time. That's the format that the Festival tried to impose, and for good reasons from their viewpoint. Trials of Oxford versus Shakspere put the Oxfordian side at a disadvantage in three key ways:

1. The burden of proof is on the Oxfordian side, either explicitly or implicitly, since a verdict for him would go against tradition, and judges are loath to take responsibility for such a move in the absence of clear, incontrovertible evidence. McLachlin made this clear in her comment.

2. To win, Oxfordians must prove *both* that Shakspere didn't write the works *and* that Oxford did, and both beyond a reasonable doubt. This is extremely difficult in a short amount of time. Better to focus entirely on making a strong case against Shakspere, as Guy Pratte chose to do.

3. It allows Stratfordians to distract attention from the weakness of the case for Shakspere by attacking Oxford. He is very vulnerable to attack, and Stratfordians know how to exploit this. We need to keep *them* on the defensive. With Oxford, they can easily put us on the defensive.

The SAC, being neutral about the true identity of the author, was in a position to challenge the SBT to a mock trial of its claim without putting forth an alternative candidate—we have none.

No less an Oxfordian than Charlton Ogburn, Jr., said that you can't get anywhere with Oxford unless you first dispose of Shakspere. That is what the SAC was designed to do, and so far we are still on schedule with our objective of *legitimizing* the authorship issue by April 23, 2016.

It's very unlikely that the Birthplace Trust will ever agree to participate in a trial on our terms, but there are other things we can do to call attention to their unwillingness to back their claim. If the Festival wants to host a mock trial, let it be the trial to which we've challenged the SBT. If the SBT declines, let Guy Pratte and his Festival colleagues represent the orthodox position. We've extended our £40,000 donation offer to them, and should not let them off the hook easily. There's time before 2016, and things are going our way. We should be driving a hard bargain. As far as the SAC is concerned, we'd like to have a trial, but we're not desperate to have one. I hope the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship won't agree to participate in one before the SAC strategy has time to play out.

Until that time, I propose these guidelines for any doubter participation in mock trials:

1. Any proposal that puts doubters at an unfair disadvantage should be totally unacceptable.

2. The burden of proof should be on the Stratfordian side to prove its long-standing claim that the authorship is beyond doubt and the issue should therefore be regarded as illegitimate and suppressed throughout academia, and that all doubters are mentally and/or morally unfit. The standard of proof in any mock trial of this issue should be "beyond a reasonable doubt."

(Framing the issue this way eliminates the issue of statutes of limitations, since the doubter side is not seeking to overturn the traditional attribution and transfer credit to someone else. We merely argue that there is reasonable doubt, so it should be treated as a legitimate issue. Stratfordians are suppressing this issue *now*, so it is a current issue with real consequences. Academics should be free to teach and study this issue without fear of ending their careers. Suppressing an issue is a violation of academic freedom and calls for proof beyond doubt.)

3. Each side should be permitted to choose its own legal counsel, develop its own strategy, choose its own witnesses, and present its own case within rules agreed between the parties.

4. Each side should be allowed to cross-examine and rebut any witnesses for the other side.

5. There should be enough time to hear both cases in detail and to cross-examine witnesses.

6. There should be both a panel of judges, and a jury, both of which issue separate verdicts. This will help to keep both groups honest, making sure they rule on the evidence presented. Each would have to be concerned about getting it right in case the other verdict is different.

a) The panel of judges should consist of three unbiased judges, with each side choosing one, and the two of them choosing a third judge to preside. (This is standard in arbitration cases.) Each of the three judges should be required to sign a statement swearing to or affirming their neutrality and agreeing to base their verdict solely on the evidence presented during the trial.

b) The jury should consist of six to eight members chosen from a pool of prominent, highly credible people whose verdict will be seen as carrying a great deal of weight because of who they are. As with the judges, they should be required to sign a statement swearing to or affirming their neutrality and agreeing to base their verdict solely on the evidence presented during the trial.

[John Shahan is chairman and CEO of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition and a former vice president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. In addition to his career in health care planning, he studied community organization at the USC School of Social Work, strategic planning at UCLA's Anderson School of Management, and law at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.]

Worth Remembering—Esther Singleton

by James A. Warren

Esther Singleton, author of more than sixty books, is worth remembering for many reasons, not least for two books and one article she wrote about Shakespeare and his works. The first book, *The Shakespeare Garden*, published in 1922, is a well-known account of gardens in Shakespeare's day and how their shady walks, pleached alleys and flower-wreathed arbors lent themselves to re-creation—to renewing the body and refreshing the mind and spirit. Her other two works on Shakespeare, much less well known, raise and support the idea of Edward de Vere as the author of the plays and poems attributed to William Shakespeare.

The first of those two works is her 1929 book *Shakespearian Fantasias: Adventures in the Fourth Dimension*. It is virtually unknown because it was privately printed and is long out of print; very few copies exist in libraries or are available for purchase from antiquarian booksellers. Drawing on the term *fantasia*, which implies a world of imagination, fancy or whimsy, Singleton presents us with eleven fantasies or dreams in which a woman from the 20th century mysteriously finds herself transplanted into the world of many of Shakespeare's plays, including *Twelfth Night, As You Like It, Much Ado About Nothing, Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. The woman, whose name we never learn, meets many of Shakespeare's most interesting characters, some of whom

confide in her the reasons for their actions not revealed in the plays. For instance, Maria from the society of *Twelfth Night* explains that she thought up the trick on Malvolio in order to attract the attention of Sir Toby Belch with the goal of marrying him.

Of greater interest, however, are the book's many references to Edward de Vere. Some of them are quite open, such as references to viols and other musical instruments that de Vere brought back from Italy (p.14). Similar references describe the subtle and delicious scent of Italian perfume, known as "Lord Oxford's perfume," which was all the rage among court ladies and gallants, including two of the characters our time traveler meets—Berowne from *Love's Labor's Lost* (152), and Beatrice from *Much Ado About Nothing* (224).

More importantly, the visitor encounters characters from Shakespeare's plays who quote poems by Edward de Vere. Jaques recites de Vere's "What is Desire?" ("If women could be fair and yet not fond") in the Forest of Arden (89). Beatrice recites a shortened version of one of de Vere's poems ("Is he god in peace or war?"), which she attributes to Benedick (224).

Even more interesting, Singleton's narrator describes several characters she meets in terms that could easily have been, and were, descriptions of de Vere—e.g., her description of Benedick (225-226), or that of Berowne, whom she describes as:

> One of the most fascinating and elegant men I have ever been privileged to speak to. . . .Everything about Lord Berowne expressed the most intensive cultivation of body and mind—he was *point device* in every respect.
>
> And he was just as delicate in speech: every word was carefully selected; every word was fastidiously pronounced; and the intonations, modulations, and inflections of his voice were like music. Lord Berowne was "the most goodly fashioned man I ever saw; from head to foot in form, rare and most absolute." He fascinated me.

And of Jaques as he finishes reciting a poem, she notes that,

> It had not taken me long to see the Jaques's melancholy was produced by a supersensitive soul and that his cynical philosophy was the result of his worldly experience, which had been wide and varied. And, as the brightest sun casts the darkest shadow, Jaques was himself a paradox. Therefore, a solemn sadness and merry wit, dark philosophy and delicate

poetry, cutting satire and tender sentiment played in and out of his mind just as the sunlight was playing on the leaves of the beech-tree above us. The more the melancholy Jaques talked to me—and he talked long and earnestly—the more privileged I considered myself to share the inner thoughts of this young aristocrat, poet, and philosopher, who sought to hide his delicate nature beneath a masque of cynicism. That Jaques had been a gallant lover I had not the slightest doubt. The verses he had just read to me were not the mere fruit of imagination. I longed to know what the experience of his heart had been and who was the fair cruelty who had made him mistrust all other women. Yet, of course, I dared not intrude any questions upon a man of such high-bred dignity, and so reserved and so sensitive withal. (90-91)

Singleton also provides her thoughts on why Shakespeare's works have been so enduring and so endearing for more than 400 years. Upon hearing Jaques lamenting that he "met a fool 'n the forest"—the Duke describing how "Sweet are the uses of adversity" and Amiens describing how the winter wind is "not so unkind as man's ingratitude"—her narrator tells the Duke that "The world hasn't changed in these many hundred years . . . that song might easily have been written today." She then muses to herself about the timelessness of so many of Shakespeare's works:

I realized that a great deal of what we call modern to-day, with so much superficial assurance and pretentious arrogance, is not progress nor will it be permanent, being but a fleeting phase that our shell-shocked world is passing through before it can right itself again—if it ever will—whereas everlasting is the culture expressed by this forgiving, and kindly, and gracious duke and by the tender-hearted, although cynical and melancholy, Jaques, lover of beasts and birds and hater of intrigues and shams, cruelty and deceit. Here, in the forest of Arden, I have found the Eternal Verities and all the Humanities; and that is the reason I should like to dwell here. (98-99)

Finally, when Berowne explains the nature of euphuism, Singleton has him make statements that could only have been truthfully made by de Vere:

"And what is Euphuism?" I asked.
"Oh, Euphuism," Berowne replied, "is a new literary movement – I am surprised you do not know this when all Europe is affected by it – to enrich language by graceful rhetoric and choice of words of new fashion. The name came from a book called *Euphues, the Anatomie of Wit*, written by my fellow-worker, John Lyly, and printed a few years ago."
"Do you remember the date?" I asked.
"Oh, yes," Berowne replied, "Euphues appeared in 1579. I am supposed to be Philautus. In the next year, Lyly published *Euphues and his England*, which he dedicated to *me;* and he wrote here: 'whoso compareth the honor of your Lordship's noble house

with the fidelity of your ancestors may well say which no other can truly gainsay, *Vero nihil verius*.'" (160-161)

We can conclude that in September 1922, when Singleton published *The Shakespeare Garden*, with its description of "the small and simple garden such as [Shakespeare] had himself at Stratford-on-Avon and such as he walked through when he visited Ann Hathaway in her cottage at Shottery," she believed that William Shakspere of Stratford-on-Avon was the author of Shakespeare's works. We can further conclude that by October 1929, when she published *Shakespearian Fantasias*, with its many references to Edward de Vere, she believed that de Vere was the author.

So what happened during that seven-year period to change her belief? The answer, as Singleton explained in her article, "Was Edward de Vere Shakespeare?" is that between writing the two books she read J. Thomas Looney's *'Shakespeare' Identified in Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, which convinced her that de Vere was the true author: "I now pronounce myself a believer in the theory that Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was the author of the great Shakespearean plays."

Knowing of Singleton's strong belief in de Vere as the author raises a second set of questions. Why all these coy references to him in *Fantasias*? Why does she not make a simple declaration in that book of her new belief? Why all the coded language and references that only Oxfordians would even notice?

The answer is again found in Singleton's article, where she discusses the deep aversion she had during most of her life even to considering the question of whether anyone other than Shakspere was the author. Realizing that many other people still have that same reluctance, she begins her article by imploring her readers

Richard Waugaman Announces Another New Book

Richard Waugaman has published a second Kindle book. This one is entitled *It's Time to Re-Vere the Works of "Shake-Speare": A Psychoanalyst Reads the Works of Edward de Vere.* Most of it was previously published. One previously unpublished chapter is on the psychology of pseudonymity. It's available for 99 cents here—
http://www.amazon.com/Time-Re-Vere-Works-Shake-Speare-Psychoanalyst-ebook/dp/B00Q1P3VP4/ref=asap_B00PF0NPWU_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1417080460&sr=1-2
Dr. Waugaman is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Faculty Expert on Shakespeare for Media Contacts at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. His previous Kindle book is *Newly Discovered Works by "William Shakespeare," a.k.a. Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford* (2014).

not to reject out of hand a belief in de Vere: "You who read this, I beg you not to condemn me and the theory but to read further on." She then describes the mental process, painful and almost against her will, that she went through as she became convinced of de Vere's authorship. More importantly, she describes how elated she felt at finding that obscure passages in the plays, reread with knowledge of de Vere's authorship and his biography, had become "so clear, so plain, so reasonable, and so delightful."

Singleton withheld the article from publication during her lifetime. It first appeared in print in the American Shakespeare Fellowship *News-Letter*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (June-July 1940), some ten years after her death. Because no summary of Singleton's article can do justice to the power of her own words, which have been so successful in opening the minds of people I have shared them with, I strongly recommend reading (or rereading) her full article. It was reprinted in *Building the Case: Nothing Truer Than Truth*, the second of the multi-volume anthology of Oxfordian materials compiled by Paul Altrocchi and Hank Whittemore.

I note in closing that *Shakespearian Fantasias* was reportedly among the prize acquisitions of Henry Clay Folger, founder of the Folger Shakespeare Library. He loved the book so much that he not only purchased a dozen copies and sent them out to major players in the field of Shakespearean research, but also purchased the original manuscript, which is now part of the Folger Library's collection.

Shakespeare Full Circle

by Nate Briggs

Seeing a recent local production of *Much Ado About Nothing* brought me back to the Shakespeare Authorship Question, and, incidentally, the state of live productions of Shakespeare among the many entertainment options that we have available.

For those of you who have not been keeping score at home, there is an Authorship Question that has been moving forward, by fits and starts, since the 1930s. The majority of disputants argue that William Shakspere—a sometime actor, who (at best) attended a few years of grammar school, and (at worst) was actually illiterate—somehow knew Latin, somehow knew Greek, somehow knew things he couldn't conceivably have known, somehow acquired the largest vocabulary of almost any writer in the English language (including words he invented himself), and wrote works that have been performed and read continually for almost 500 years.

In answer to this "majority report," we have always had the skeptical, and maybe eccentric, minority (growing a little larger, now) which is persuaded that "William Shakespeare" was simply a name attached to plays and

verse to draw attention away from their true author: the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere.

The reason this controversy comes to mind when discussing Shakespeare in modern times is the easy and natural way that authorship by a member of the Elizabethan court heavily reinforces the sensation I have long had: that, year by year, the "unedited" Bard is becoming accessible to fewer and fewer people when these works are staged.

As a quick example, let's consider a short speech from *Much Ado*—Benedick going completely over the top in pleading with his commander:

> Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia, bring you the length of Prester John's foot, fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard, do you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy.

The sense of hyperbole is obvious. Most of the audience can feel it. But — even among this very educated audience of about 1,000—would even 100 be acquainted with the "Great Cham"? Would even twenty know who "Prester John" might be, or where Benedick might have gone to find him?

This is only one of hundreds of speeches in the canon that serve to destroy the claim that these were "popular" plays, written for a common audience. Even in Shakespeare's day, the groundlings—paying a penny to stand in the yard at the Globe for three hours on a summer afternoon—would have had no idea what most of this speech meant. They would have responded in the same way as a modern audience: to the obvious tone of annoyance. Benedick has a strong distaste for Beatrice, and wants to get away from her. That's how they would have understood it. Strange to think that this could be fare for the workingman. Bear baiting was just up the street. It was cheaper, and far easier to understand.

Those who would have fully understood the references in this speech, and many other similar speeches, were all at the court, buzzing like flies around Queen Elizabeth. A rarified group of men and women, multilingual, university trained, and with the leisure to do things like discuss travel, recall Greek mythology, read history, debate religious thought and consider the meaning of life. They are the ones who would have understood the details of Benedick's speech and savored it as a kind of "inside" humor. It was entertainment written by one of the cultural elite, for the appreciation of the cultural elite, in the same way that modern universities still offer productions of Aeschylus and other worthies.

The appeal of these court plays, when they arrived at a public venue like the Globe, would have been that the queen and her people had already seen them (*"As played at the palace! Two thumbs up from Her Majesty!"*). They

would need to be dumbed down a bit (there were no copyright issues, so everyone could toss in their two pence). Theater managers, writers, actors, and perhaps Mr. Shakspere himself, might have tinkered with them. Some might say "corrupted them."

And yet, despite a multitude of revisions made for a less sophisticated audience, what has come down to us, in our own time, is the most pungent thought, and feeling, and description prepared by a man whose genius not only seems effortless, but who even took the occasion to include current events, court gossip and political commentary.

The plays began as entertainment for the people residing at their cultural mountaintop. And to our cultural mountaintop they appear to be returning, since the plays —when presented in our time—seem to be in a foreign language when spoken at a regular conversational pace.

They are full of qualifiers upon qualifiers, sub-clauses upon sub-clauses. There are sentences so long they seem to double back on each other. Words are spoken that have long fallen out of use. Other words are spoken that we still use, but which meant something else to Shakespeare. All of this makes a dense flow of the jargon of the Age of Elizabeth, mixed with thick and fast references to mythology, history, botany, names, places and even foreign languages.

The modern, untrained ear is simply not ready for this much semantic freight. In a live theatrical setting, you can hear incomprehension ripple through the crowd as small gems of articulate wit fly over the heads of playgoers who are trying to dip their toes into high culture.

You could say that part of a modern director's assignment is to make sure that the actors emphasize the "summary" sentences sprinkled through the text—the ones that actually explain what's going on—so a helpless audience is not completely cast adrift. The small minority of playgoers who do understand all of what the players are saying are only able to stay on track because they are accustomed to coping with this avalanche of wit, either through education or long experience. When it comes to the "full text" plays, once again we are seeing entertainment created by the elite for an elite consumer.

The human situations that Shakespeare presents are enduring and will be of interest to human beings as long as we continue to exist. And yet, the real opportunities will be for those people who can simplify, i.e., make accessible, the classic texts to make them more palatable to a modern audience.

The modern paradox of Shakespeare is that, for the sake of popularity, his works must become less "Shakespearean" while, at the same time, other venues will continue to quietly offer "high culture" to something like an audience of courtiers: a specialized elite watching a form of theater that no one else really understands.

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