The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Volume 49: No. 3 **Published by the Shakespeare Oxford Society** **Fall 2013**

Special Unification Issue

MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS

John Hamill

Shakespeare Oxford Book Sale
See Page 18

In This Issue

Great news! You might have noticed that our organization has a new title! We are still registered as The Shakespeare Oxford Society, Inc., but are now doing business as the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship (SOF).

At the joint Shakespeare Oxford Society (SOS) and Shakespeare Fellowship (SF) Conference in Toronto, Canada (Oct. 17-20), the members of both organizations voted overwhelmingly (about 95%) to unify.

We were lucky that the unification of the SF and SOS was very harmonious. I especially want to thank Tom Regnier, President of the Shakespeare Fellowship, for helping to make this unification dream a reality. We knew that there were no serious issues between us that justified maintaining separate organizations. We both have the same objective—supporting research to prove that the Earl of Oxford was the true author of the Shakespeare plays. We will be looking at several ways to raise the funding for this. The new Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Board has already begun the work of merging the operations of the two groups. Tom Regnier and Joan Leon will be first and second vice-presidents, respectively.

John Hamill and Tom Regnier, presidents of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship, immediately after signing the unification agreement founding the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, Toronto Canada, October 21 2013.

SOS Library

This year it was also a goal of mine to dispose of the SOS library of about 1,800 books that have been in storage and unavailable for years to anyone. I am pleased to report that the SOS has arranged to donate over 500 books to the University of Mississippi at Oxford. They have a keen interest in the authorship issue, and are looking forward to expanding their Shakespeare Authorship collection. This way the books will be available for scholarly authorship research. The remaining 1,200 books or so are listed at the old SOS website and are for sale beginning November 1 on a first-come, first-served basis.

Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?

I am also pleased to note that members of the SF and SOS assisted the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition with their new book, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*? This title is now available on Amazon.com, and is in response to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* dismissing the authorship controversy. The SBT's felt need to publish a book on this issue demonstrates the headway we have made in recent years.

Newsletter Changes

This issue of the *Newsletter* will be the last under Michael Egan's editorship.

We will miss his wit and erudition, but are lucky that he will remain as editor of *The Oxfordian.* We welcome on board Alex McNeil, editor, and Roger Stritmatter, designer.

Members of the SF will receive their final issue of *Shakespeare Matters* before January 1. SOS members will continue to receive *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, as before. Beginning in 2014, all members of the new Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will receive *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* on a quarterly basis. We will also be sending to members of both organizations an appeal for donations to support our new entity. (See insert, this issue.)

Mark Rylance

Actor Mark Rylance was re-confirmed by the new SOF board November 17 as our newest honorary trustee. He joins Sir Derek Jacobi, Michael York, Roland Emmerich, and John Orloff in this important off-stage role.

Housekeeping

During the next two months we will be merging our websites and preparing a new letterhead and logo. Near the first of the year, members of both organizations will also receive an invitation to extend their membership in the newly-unified SOF. We sincerely hope you will do so. Regular dues are $65, which includes the quarterly *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* and our two annual journals, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*. If you prefer, you may renew as a Basic Member for only $50, for which you will receive the *Newsletter*.

New Website

As Tom Regnier informed us, we also have great news about our redesigned new website, http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/. Jennifer Newton, who hosts the *Shakespeare Underground* website is the designer, and she has done a magnificent job. It will soon become the official Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship website, and we have started importing materials from the old SOS site. Visitors to it and the SF site will be redirected to the new SOF home page. All of this will take a few months, but we look forward to the challenge.

New Research

We expect that 2014 will prove to be very exciting as more authorship evidence is uncovered and revealed. I am already aware of new books and movies that will come out soon that will be very surprising. We will be reporting on them on the SOF website and Facebook, and in our newsletter and two journals! I feel we have accomplished a great deal together this year. I believe that the forming of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will make us a stronger organization that can effectively promote the Oxfordian movement.

Thank You!

Finally, thanks to all who have already renewed their memberships, with special gratitude to those who provided donations at this most exciting time! Your continued support will help us overcome the many obstacles to our research in academia, and to promote the true author of the works of Shakespeare—Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Cheers!

John Hamill

President
Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

Editorial

The Bard Particle

Unification has been achieved. Congratulations and welcome to the new Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, a "marriage of true minds." Nothing is truer than that truth. Let us bid the past a wry farewell and look optimistically to the future.

Pejorative Metaphor

Among the accompanying harmonics in the chorus against reasonable doubt are the sour notes of pejorative metaphor. By this we mean false but insulting parallels which suggest, for example, that authorship skepticism is the same as Holocaust denial. This disgraceful analogy is advanced by no less than Prof. Stephen Greenblatt, holder of a named chair at Harvard, founder of New Historicism, author of *Will in the World*, receiver of numerous awards and accolades, etc. It has been repeated on his authority many times since, by others great and small.

Evidence

To Greenblatt and his epigones we contemptuously retort: It is you who are willfully denying the evidence. While taking time to score easy points at the expense of "poor Delia Bacon" and long-forgotten Victorian cryptographers, the traditionalists' most recent statement, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, completely ignores an entire generation of new research. This includes the scholarship of Price, Barber, Roe, Stritmatter and Kositsky (individually and together), Fox, Gilvary, Chiljan, Pointon, Showerman, Jiménez and many others—names familiar to our readers and yet completely unheard of in Stratford.

In some cases their ground-breaking work has appeared exclusively in this newsletter and related Oxfordian journals, normal academic publications being closed to anything that even vaguely smacks of authorship doubt. We invite all scholars to consider the implications of that statement.

Until Mssrs. Greenblatt, Shapiro, Bate, and Wells, etc., are willing to behave like the serious scholars they otherwise are, there can be no meaningful SAQ debate. We understand of course that this unfortunately is the purpose of their silence: Silencing. It's what Marcuse called repressive tolerance. Publish and perish, that is, drop your years of research like a stone into a pond, never to be seen again. Again we invite all scholars in

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Published by the
Shakespeare Oxford Society
P.O. Box 808
Yorktown Heights
New York 10598
Tel: 914 962 1717
Fax: 914 245 9713
sosoffice@optonline.net
www.shakespeare-oxford.com

Editor
Michael Egan
drmichaelegan@yahoo.com

Publications Committee
Brian Bechtold
Jim Boyd, *chair*
Katherine Chiljan
Frank Davis
John Hamill
Ramon Jiménez
Richard Joyrich
Richard Smiley

Printer
Eagle Graphics, Inc
cbenger@eaglegraphicsprinters.com

Contributors
Original research, reviews, commentary, reports, obituaries, photos and other items of interest to the Shakespeare Oxfordian community are welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the SOS or its members.

whatever discipline to consider the implications of this.

The True Deniers

The difference between ourselves and real Holocaust deniers like David Irving, is that we accept the mutually corroborating testimony of thousands of survivors with tattoos on their forearms. That their witness is neither a hoax nor a mass delusion—compare reports of the sun standing still at Fatima in 1917—is supported and confirmed by memoirs, grainy photographs and movies, letters, diaries, drawings and even architectural plans showing the ovens and gas chambers at Auschwitz. So we perfectly agree with our Stratfordian colleagues that anyone who confronts these facts and declares them non-existent or a deception has violated every known and established norm of historical analysis.

Ex tranverso, we claim the evidentiary high ground in the authorship debate, directly challenging Mssrs. Greenblatt, Shapiro, Bate, Wells and Edmondson, and with them all the rank-and-file English professors of the world. How can they turn away from the wealth of fascinating data already on the table? How can they refuse to even look at it?

The real analogy isn't with Irving and social disgust but with Galileo and the renaissance Church. The punitive insistence upon what in the 16th century was immemorial dogma supported by daily observation compares directly with today's faith-based affirmation that by the age of 14 young Will acquired the equivalent of a modern university degree in a provincial Elizabethan schoolroom.

Nor was this achievement remarkable: apparently all the village boys did it, according to Prof. Carol Rutter, another *SBD* fantasist. A few years later, and without any hint of literary talent, practice or juvenilia, Shaksper left for London where he wrote a popular erotic poem in perfect upper-class English, and became the most famous poet-playwright who ever lived. In his spare time he became a millionaire. Amen.

Meanwhile Galileo, his contemporary, armed with Kepler's data and his own scientific method, confirmed Copernicus' theory (as it then was) of heliocentrism. This was so against received wisdom and even commonsense they threatened to burn him, finally silenced him and, as even they now admit, stupidly refused so much as a glance through his telescope. Yet *Eppur si muove*, and continues to do so.

It took the Roman Catholic church 400 years to own its mistake. How long before the Church of the Stratfordian confesses too?

Lesson of the Higgs Boson

Among the interesting but broadly unaddressed questions in this whole debate is the nature of literary evidence. How true, and in what ways, is a work of art the abstract and chronicle of its time? Are there no cracks or distortions in the mirrors held up to nature? Authors notoriously lie, though in the best cases, like Shakespeare, this paradoxically serves the truth. As in mathematics, whose numerical objectivity is the soul of science, there seems to be in great art a beauty guaranteeing its truth, and a truth in beauty, as some mathematicians, echoing Keats, also claim, Even philosophers of mathematics, like G.H. Hardy in *A Mathematician's Apology* (1940), find difficulty expressing it. The aesthetics of truth are as hard to define as any philosophical Universal or *couleur de la palette*, yet just as perfectly recognizable when pointed out. In our acquisitive, material age, dominated by numbers and

computers, such claims sound irritatingly subjective and imprecise. But *eppur si muove*.

Rendering the Invisible Visible

Researchers appear to have exhausted all sources of hard or documentary evidence about Shakspere's life. Most of it deals with business, confirming our position, and yet the case for an alternative candidate has not yet been clinched. We all have the sense of something still concealed, perhaps by the omniscient but unseen hand of Lord Burleigh and his misshapen son. But how to render that invisible visible?

The conundrum resembles that confronting astrophysicists and seekers for the Higgs Boson, a fundamental particle whose existence could only be inferred. In the same way tiny exoplanets can't be seen by even our best telescopes, yet their existence and composition may be established by the slight wobble their gravitational pull generates among their neighbors. Likewise the existence of the boson, whose unseen presence affects behaviors at the quantum or sub-atomic level of matter, could be posited but not proved. Then just recently, as we know, the existence of this so-called God Particle was confirmed by the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland.

The Bard Particle

We suggest a similar pursuit of the Bard Particle, the unseen author whose magnetic existence may be inferred from the behavior of the other literary and historical bodies erratically moving in Elizabethan England. This is not a frivolous proposal, nor are we unaware of other parallels with the boson story:

> In 1964, [Professor Peter] Higgs submitted a paper to a prominent physics journal in which he formulated this idea mathematically. The paper was rejected. Not because it contained a technical error, but because the premise of an invisible something permeating space, interacting with particles to provide their mass, well, it all just seemed like heaps of overwrought speculation. The editors of the journal deemed it "of no obvious relevance to physics."[*]

Such language is familiar to Oxfordians. In the same Higgsian way we forge on, calling attention to the anomalous and unsupported data on the other side, producing new and more credible explanations on our own.

The obvious questions include the nature and quality of the education Shakspere received, how he made his fortune, the contradictions between his poetry and his life, his true connection with the Globe, why he left no writer's paper trail, and the fate of all his books and manuscripts. Why did no one ever remember meeting him or notice when he died?

Other questions: How did he come by his detailed information about northern Italy, vast classical learning and knowledge of modern languages? Where did he acquire his sophisticated knowledge of the law, medicine, military matters and all the rest? Why were not he and the Lord Chamberlain's Men arrested or interrogated at the time of Essex's rebellion?

Confounding everything is the insulting and menacing portrayal of Burleigh as Polonius, allowed to pass without penalty or even protest from the most powerful man in England. Again there is a sense of something unseen, but detectable as a change of key.

The hunt for the Bard Particle is on!

---

[*] http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/How-the-Higgs-Boson-Was-Found213876841.html#ixzz2jbVX7Vvh

Letters to the Editor

Whalen Replies to *Macbeth* Review

Dear Editor:

Thanks very much for your generous and enthusiastic review (Spring, 2013) of my second edition of *Macbeth* in the Oxfordian Shakespeare Series. You very astutely noted how an Oxfordian edition differs from a Stratfordian edition and does so in ways that can greatly enhance an appreciation of the play.

Vaulting Ambition

A few observations in the review, however, are puzzling, and I thought you might want to have my reaction. In some cases I could have provided more details. For example, Macbeth's "vaulting ambition" metaphor, which might seem to reflect his ambition to be king but in fact does the opposite (I.vii.25-28). He says he has "no spur," that is, no ambition, to "prick the sides of my intent" to be king, but "only" a vaulting ambition that would overleap itself and fall off the horse on the other side, no doubt ignominiously. The ingenious, complex metaphor of horsemanship draws on the feat of vaulting onto the bare back of a moving horse (OED 1), like a circus trick today. Macbeth is saying he doesn't have what it takes to do that successfully or to reach for the throne successfully.

Significantly, the striking, eloquent metaphor concludes a 28-line soliloquy in which Macbeth, as in my line note, "again exhibits no determined ambition but only a fearful reluctance. He is arguing himself out of assassinating his king" (64). He says it would return to plague him. Justice would require him to die, too. "Double trust" requires him to protect Duncan, not kill him. Duncan is a decent man, his death would call forth pity, and Macbeth's reputation would be ruined. These are the interior thoughts, I submit, of a man who has no spur of ambition to be king. As you say, in this case "royal murder corrupts absolutely" but the honorable warrior Macbeth, brave in battle, shrinks from corrupting himself by royal murder. He has neither the experience nor temperament for it.

Orson Welles as Macbeth (1948)

Stewart and Scotland

Some details: I do not say that Stewart was the chief source for *Macbeth*. It was Holinshed, as in the first sentence of "Narrative Sources" (205). The play text preserves "scorched" the snake (3.2.13-14), as in the First Folio; and the line note explains why but could have cited the OED entry for "scorched" (v.3 obsolete, 1550, 1597, 1656 incl. *Macbeth*). It's always debatable whether an unusual word in the play text is a misprint. In possibly doubtful cases, as here, where "scotched" would also work, it's proba-

bly prudent to preserve the First Folio word and OED early meaning. When Ross says the news traveled "as thick as tale can post with post" (1.iii.97-8), it's quite clear he means as quickly as an interesting story or rumor can spread widely. Suggesting that "can post" in the First Folio should be "came post" might well be valid, but again our text follows the First Folio in doubtful cases. In both versions, the meaning is clear enough and the First Folio wording seems defensible.

Macbeth's Suicide?

Finally, Macbeth's possible suicide, a sensitive matter. Kirsch, Jacobi and I suggest that Macbeth may have committed suicide during his fight with Macduff, and nothing in the play text and action precludes it. Recognizing that he is outnumbered, he might have killed himself to avoid the ignominy of possible disabling injury and capture to "be baited [like a bear] with the rabble's curse" (V.ix.29) as a doomed prisoner. (Cf. Cleopatra at V.ii.207-21.) More important, he has contemplated the pros/cons of suicide five times in Act V (198), ponderings not mentioned in the review.

That suicide "fatally undercuts the irony of Macduff's birth" does not seem inevitable. The prophesying apparition said that "none of woman born shall harm Macbeth," and that deception holds true whether Macduff (not "born" but delivered by Caesarian section) harms/kills him, or Macbeth, finally realizing the prophecies were deceptive, kills himself (ironically?) by pulling Macduff's sword into himself. In any case, I agree that Macbeth's suicide is debatable. Not everyone will want to accept the possibility despite the prevalence of suicide by other leading characters in Shakespeare plays.

Many thanks for your close reading of several key passages and excellent challenges. I appreciated your review and thought these few comments might be of interest.

Richard F. Whalen

It Tolls for Me!—Ed.

Dear Editor:

I just received my copy of the Spring 2013 Newsletter. I enjoyed Richard Waugaman's article on "Dating *Macbeth,*" but someone made a howling error in including the portrait of "Sir Thomas Bell." This Thomas Bell was a generation older than the subject of the article (as a quick check on Google would have revealed), and had no apparent connection with the former Catholic priest.

Connie Beane

Oxford's and Shakespeare's Verse

Dear Editor:

Oxford's verse and Shakespeare's verse are light years apart. The odds that either could have written the other's work are much lower than the odds of getting hit by lightning." —*Elliott and Valenza.*

But compare

What plague is greater than the grief of mind?
The grief of mind that eats in every vein;
In every vein that leaves such clots behind;
Such clots behind as breed such bitter pain;

So bitter pain that none shall ever find,
What plague is greater than the grief of mind?"

—*Edward de Vere*

She is so hot because the meat is cold;
The meat is cold because you come not home;
You come not home because you have no stomach;
You have no stomach having broke your fast;
But we that know what 'tis to watch and pray
Are penitent for your default to-day.

—Shakespeare, *Comedy of Errors*

Unique Resemblance with all the odds against it.
All the odds against it and yet it happened;
And yet it happened, Elliott and Valenza,
Elliott and Valenza, what are the odds,
What are the odds of Unique Resemblance?

E&V, how does this lightning strike you?
Lightning strike you, looking at the Droeshout
At the Droeshout and see Edward de Vere
Edward de Vere's initials in the ruff
In the ruff, put there by O rare Ben Jonson,
E&V, how does this lightning strike you?
What are the odds of Unique Resemblance?

Sid Lubow

Oxford's Fifty-Play Canon and When it was Written

Ramon Jiménez

The size of the canon of Oxfordian plays—which has traditionally been called the Shakespeare canon, and which is the largest surviving canon of any Elizabethan playwright—has remained within a play or two of thirty-nine for more than a hundred years. It consists of plays written by Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, most of which were published anonymously or under his pseudonym William Shakespeare.

Additions and Subtractions

Beginning with the Third Folio in 1663, plays have been added to or subtracted from the canon, according to the conclusions of individual editors and critics. Several eighteenth-century scholars found additional plays that they felt belonged in it, none more so than Edward Capell, who in 1767 suggested that the complete canon contained at least fifty-eight plays (I, 9-10). On the other hand, Edmond Malone reduced the canon to a mere thirty-four, in his last essay on the subject, in 1790 (II, 294-6). Today most scholars appear to accept the following three plays as belonging to the core canon, in addition to the original thirty-six.

● *Pericles* was omitted from the First and Second Folios, added in the Third and Fourth with seven others and, after much discussion, accepted into today's canon, but considered a collaboration with George Wilkins by most scholars.

● *The Two Noble Kinsmen* was omitted from all the Shakespeare Folios, but was printed separately in 1634 as a collaboration with John Fletcher. It was added to the canon by various nineteenth-century editors, and is now considered by most scholars a collaboration with Fletcher. In 1965 Paul Bertram attributed it to Shakespeare in its entirety.

● *Edward III* was published anonymously in 1596 by Cuthbert Burby, who also published *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet* in the following two years. It was ascribed to Shakespeare as early as the mid-sixteenth century, but thereafter only occasionally, until modern times. In 1934 Alfred Hart (219-41) and, subsequently, Eliot Slater (1982; 1988) declared it a Shakespeare play, an ascription confirmed by Eric Sams in his 1996 edition. It was included in the second edition of the *The Riverside Shakespeare* in 1997 and in the New Cambridge series in 1998, but many scholars still consider it a collaboration, possibly with George Peele.

Collaborations

Of the thirty-nine plays in the modern canon, three, in addition to the three just listed, are thought by many scholars to be collaborations—*Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Henry VIII*. (In the opinion of some scholars, there are even more canonical plays that are collaborations, but this is a minority view.) There are good reasons to doubt that Oxford co-authored any of these plays. The alleged collaborators were all younger

and less talented than Oxford, who had been writing plays for the court since the 1570s.* If he were to collaborate, it is more likely that he would do so with the playwrights he employed as secretaries—Anthony Munday and John Lyly. For the purposes of this paper, I leave aside the issues of collaboration and of subsequent revision by Oxford or another playwright, and proceed on the premise that Oxford was the originator and primary author of all the plays described.

The size of the canon continues to fluctuate, even to the present day, as scholars, especially non-Stratfordian scholars, bring new research to bear on the group of twenty or so anonymous plays that exist in a belt of apocrypha orbiting the canon.

As is clear from the above paragraphs, the size of the canon continues to fluctuate, even to the present day, as scholars, especially non-Stratfordian scholars, bring new research to bear on the group of twenty or so anonymous plays that exist in a belt of apocrypha orbiting the canon. Within the Shakespeare establishment there has been surprisingly little attention paid to these plays. On the basis of previous research and my own investigation, it appears that at least a dozen were actually written by Oxford, and that he wrote most of them before writing the earliest canonical plays. The following five plays constitute what I call Shakespeare's "apprenticeship" plays, his first versions of plays that he later rewrote.

The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth

Famous Victories was not registered until 1594, nor published until 1598, but there is good evidence of performances by the Queen's Men at the Bull in Bishopsgate before 1588 (Chambers 1923, IV, 17). The 1598 quarto was printed and sold by Thomas Creede, who also printed and sold *Henry V* two years later. *Famous Victories* contains the same fifteen plot elements that exist in the canonical Prince Hal trilogy, now popularly called *The Henriad* (Greer 238-41). Furthermore, the playwright employed for the first time in the English theater the dramatic device of alternating comic and historical scenes, a technique duplicated in the trilogy and in other history plays in the canon (Ribner 70-1). In 1928 B. M. Ward ascribed *Famous Victories* to the Earl of Oxford and argued that he wrote it in the last months of 1574, after returning from his sudden and short-lived flight to the continent. In 1961 Seymour Pitcher published a detailed argument that *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* belonged in the Shakespeare canon.

The True Tragedy of Richard the Third

On June 19, 1594 the following entry appeared in the Stationers Register:

> An enterlude entituled, The Tragedie of Richard the Third wherein is showen the Death of Edward the Fourthe with the smotheringe of the twoo princes in the Tower, with the lamentable end of Shores wife, and the Conjunction of the twoo houses of Lancaster and Yorke. (Chambers 1923, IV, 43.)

A quarto with the title *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third,* etc. was published in the same year. Just three years

* This point will be clarified in Part 2 of this paper.

later the rewritten play, *The tragedie of King Richard the Third with the death of the Duke of Clarence*, was registered and published, also anonymously. A *Richard the 3* was mentioned by Francis Meres in 1598. *True Tragedy* dramatizes the actions of Richard Plantagenet, later Richard III, in almost the same way and in the same order as in the canonical *Richard III*, and the cast is nearly identical. Act II of *Richard III* opens at the same time and place that *True Tragedy* begins—in 1483, with Edward IV on his death-bed, attempting to reconcile his nobles. As detailed in my 2004 article, and subsequently by Eric Sams (2008, 114-25), both plays are based on the same events in the same sixteen-month period ending with the Battle of Bosworth.

The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England

The publication of *The Troublesome Reign* in two parts in 1591 marked the first appearance of a Shakespeare play in print. Although no author was indicated, a second quarto containing both parts appeared in 1611 with the phrase "Written by W. Sh." on the title page. A third quarto was published in 1622 with the phrase "Written by W. Shakespeare" again on the title page (Chambers 1923, IV, 23). Although Francis Meres mentioned a *King John* in 1598, *Troublesome Reign* was the only King John play in print until 1623. The case for its inclusion in the canon was made by Eric Sams in 1995 (145-53) and elaborated in my paper in 2010. Both King John plays tell the same story in the same sequence of events, with only minor variations. The same characters appear in both plays and both plays contain the same scenes in the same order, except that in *King John* the dramatist deleted three scenes and shortened several others.

The Taming of a Shrew

The two Shrew plays have a similar history, the first, anonymous, version being registered and printed as *The Taming of a Shrew* in 1594. In his Diary, Philip Henslowe subsequently recorded a group of plays performed by "my Lord Admerall men and my Lorde Chamberlen men" in his theater at Newington Butts in June 1594. Onstage, just a few days apart, were "Hamlet," "Andronicous," "the Tamynge of A Shrowe" and four other plays. (Chambers 1930, II, 319.) The canonical *Shrew* did not appear until 1623, in the First Folio. According to E. K. Chambers, ". . . it is clear that *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* were regarded as commercially the same" (1930, I, 323).

The two *Shrew* plays agree in theme, plot, and sub-plot. All the main characters appear in both, although the names of most have been changed. Of the fifteen scenes in the anonymous Shrew, all but three occur in the Folio *Shrew*. The three structural components—the Sly frame, the "taming" plot and the subplot—are the same, except that in the Folio Sly disappears after the second Induction scene. In 1995 Eric Sams devoted a chapter in *The Real Shakespeare* to demonstrating that the anonymous *Shrew* was the dramatist's first version (136-45), a claim supported and elaborated in my article in 2012.

The True Chronicle History of King Leir

Philip Henslowe also recorded two performances of the anonymous *King Leir* in April 1594, and it was registered a month later (Chambers 1923, IV, 25). But it was not published until 1605, the quarto bearing no author's name. The

canonical *King Lear* was registered in 1607 and published in 1608 as by "M. William Shak-speare" (Chambers 1923, III, 488). A revised version appeared in the *First Folio*. Evidence that the dramatist used the anonymous play as a template on which to construct a new one was detailed by Eric Sams in 2008 (268-301). In his revision, the dramatist used the same basic story, which he converted from a romance to a tragedy, and added characters, incidents and details. He also added a subplot that mirrors and complements the main plot, and completely rewrote all the dialogue, retaining many images, phrases and dramatic devices.

Two Recent Ascriptions

The following two plays were not published, nor were they ascribed to Shakespeare, until modern times. In spite of solid book-length studies placing them firmly in the Shakespeare canon, nearly all orthodox scholars continue to assert that their authors cannot be determined.

Edmond Ironside

The manuscript of *Edmond Ironside* was unknown until 1865, when it was discovered by Halliwell-Phillips in a forgotten Folio in the British Museum. At the time of its first publication in 1927 the play had not been seen for perhaps 350 years. It was first staged in an obscure London theater in April 1986. In the same year, Eric Sams published *Shakespeare's Lost Play,* Edmond Ironside, demonstrating with overwhelming evidence that it was indeed an early Shakespeare drama.

1 Richard II or *Thomas of Woodstock*

Another anonymous manuscript discovered in the same volume as *Edmond Ironside* is *1 Richard II* or *Thomas of Woodstock*. When it was first published in 1870, it hadn't been seen for at least two hundred years. Michael Egan's edition in 2006 demonstrated that it was written before Shakespeare's *Richard II* by the same author. Its first modern performance was in the University High School Gymnasium in Iowa City, Iowa in April 1973. Egan's edition of the play, with an original ending in the Elizabethan manner, was performed in Boston 2002.

This brings the total to forty-six—thirty-nine in the orthodox canon, and an additional seven for which substantial arguments have been made for Shakespeare's authorship. The following five anonymous plays were attributed to Shakespeare on their title pages and/or have been convincingly ascribed to him by various scholars. [*]

Arden of Faversham

Arden of Faversham was published anonymously in 1592. MacDonald Jackson has written at least five times on *Arden*, beginning with his thesis in 1963. And each time this Stratfordian scholar has come closer to attributing the entire play to Shakespeare. He was anticipated by the poet A. C. Swinburne, who called the play "the young Shakespeare's first tragic masterpiece" (136) and pronounced Alice Arden to be the original of Lady Macbeth and Cleon's wife Dionyza in *Pericles* (139). Eva Turner Clark

[*] **Stop Press!** When this article was already in print news came that The Royal Shakespeare Company and Palgrave Macmillan have published a collection of ten anonymous plays titled *Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays*, edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen. The editors assert that Shakespeare was "involved," if only as a collaborator, in *Arden of Faversham*, *Locrine*, *Edward III*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell* and *Sir Thomas More*.

identified the play *Murderous Michael*, performed at court in 1579, as the earliest version of *Arden* (116-161).

Arden is based on a sensational murder that took place in 1551 and the subject of several pamphlets. In the actual case, a servant named Michael was one of the murderers of Thomas Arden. In a sentiment similar to that of several Shakespearean scholars, J. Chur-ton Collins described the author as "a powerful and original genius" who had "a very marked influence on the development of popular Tragedy" (184-5). He had no idea who he was, but was certain he was not Shakespeare.

The Spanish Tragedy

The Spanish Tragedy was registered in 1592 and published without a date in the next year or two, in both cases absent an author's name (Chambers 1923, IV, 395). It has been routinely attributed to Thomas Kyd on the sole evidence of a phrase in a pamphlet by Thomas Heywood published twenty years later. Several scholars have written about the remarkable similarity between *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* (Boas xlvi-xlix). Both plays feature "ghosts, procrastination, madness, mad women and revenge; but also apostrophes to Fortune, customary suits of solemn black . . . etc." (Ross 4), and both contain a play-within-the-play and other similar dramatic devices. It is on the basis of these similarities that Kyd has been proposed as the author of the so-called *Ur-Hamlet*, a play no longer, if ever, available. Stratfordian scholar John Southworth has listed more than thirty phrases and ideas in *The Spanish Tragedy* that also appeared in the Shakespeare canon, most of them in the early plays—*Titus Andronicus* and the Henry VI trilogy (289-92). The nineteenth-century scholar Charles Crawford found so much similarity between *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Arden of Faversham* that he concluded that they were both by Kyd; but in light of the convincing evidence that Shakespeare wrote Arden, he is the more logical choice. In two papers published in 2005, Chuck Berney detailed the considerable evidence for assigning The Spanish Tragedy to Shakespeare.

Sir Thomas More

Sir Thomas More was not published until 1844. Seven decades later, W. W. Greg asserted that the manuscript had been copied out by someone under the "immediate supervision" of the author (1911, xvi). Two years later he concluded that the copier was Anthony Munday (1913, 89-90). This makes sense, since we know that Munday went to work for Oxford around 1578, which is also the likely date of *Sir Thomas More*. However five different hands have been detected in the several pages of additions that were made at an indefinite time after the original transcription. Some scholars claim that among those hands was that of William Shakspere of Stratford, on the grounds that the handwriting in the manuscript matches his six alleged signatures. In 1981 Thomas Merriam concluded, based on his method of stylometrics, that the original play was entirely by Shakespeare. In 2003 Fran Gidley catalogued the linguistic features and other elements in *Sir Thomas More* that are identical or nearly so with those in the Shakespeare canon.

The Lamentable Tragedy of Locrine

Locrine was registered in 1594 and printed the next year as "Newly set forth, overseen, and corrected by W. S.," the first appearance of Shakespeare's initials on a play quarto (Chambers 1923, IV, 26-7). It next appeared in

the Third and Fourth Folios. The phrases on the title page suggest that it was an old play, perhaps decades old. Its primary source is the English history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the same source for both King Lear plays. And it is similar to them in that it is about an ancient British King, Brutus, and his deathbed division of his kingdom among his three sons, one of whom is Locrine, the ancestor of King Leir/Lear. Like *Hamlet*, *Locrine* is a play about revenge that concludes in a bloodbath. By the end, eight principal characters have been killed or have committed suicide, and only one is left standing. *Locrine* has been attributed to both Robert Greene and George Peele, while Sidney Lee suggested that its author also wrote the anonymous *King Leir* (*King Leir* xx-xxi). Eric Sams assigned it to Shakespeare on both external and internal evidence. He placed great credence in the title-page attribution on the grounds that the printer, Thomas Creede, published at least four canonical Shakespeare plays (1995, 155, 165). He also called attention to the multiple similarities between the language, style, imagery, ideas and dramatic devices in *Locrine* and those in the Shakespeare canon (1995, 166).

The True Chronicle History of the Whole Life and Death of Thomas, Lord Cromwell

Lord Cromwell is another play attributed to "W. S." According to the 1602 title page, it was acted by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and to the 1613 title page, by the renamed King's Men, the company being a frequent source of Shakespeare plays.(Chambers 1923, IV, 8). It was again attributed to Shakespeare on a play-list in 1656 and later included in the Third and Fourth Folios. In 1846 the German critic von Schlegel declared *Cromwell* one of Shakespeare's "best and maturest works" (445). But Swinburne called it "a piece of worthless rubbish" (232). Nearly all modern critics refuse to accept the initials "W. S." as indicative of Shakespeare's authorship, though the evidence suggests that the initials on Elizabethan and Jacobean playbook title pages plays were generally correct.

According to a study by Baldwin Maxwell, thirteen plays published between 1590 and 1610 bore only the authors' initials. Ten of them, by such playwrights as Jonson, Marston, Warner, Middleton, Peele and Greene, were identified correctly (5-8, 198-9). The remaining three—*Locrine*, *Cromwell*, and *The Puritan*—were assigned to "W.S." and all appeared in Folios of Shakespeare's plays. Of these, only *The Puritan* has not been ascribed to Shakespeare by any modern critic.

The canon may be even larger than the fifty-one dramas listed. Such other anonymous plays as *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* (1594), *A Knack to Know a Knave* (1594), *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall* (1600), *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodipoll* (1600), *Nobody and Somebody* (1606), *Wily Beguiled* (1606) and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608), all have Shakespearean characteristics. The title page of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* bore the phrase "written by Wylliam Shakspere" [*sic*] (Chambers 1923 IV, 54). *Mucedorus*, *Fair Em* and *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* were bound together as "Shakespeare, vol. 1" in the library of Charles II. *The Merry Devil* was registered as "by Wm. Shakespeare" in 1653 (Chambers IV, 30).

Fifty Plays

Thus an Oxfordian canon of at least fifty plays is a conservative estimate. Nor is it

extreme to suppose that he began writing plays in his early teens, an idea that will be explored in the second part of this paper. An *oeuvre* of fifty plays in a forty-year writing career is not unusual. Ben Jonson, for instance, wrote fifty. William Shakspere of Stratford supposedly wrote forty plays in the twenty-six years between 1589 and 1615. There are numerous other examples of similar productivity.

are higher than if you shoot only twenty times. The other side of this axiom of course is that the more you shoot the more times may miss the target. As W.H. Auden paradoxically observed, ". . .the chances are that, in the course of his lifetime, the major poet will write more bad poems than the minor" (15).

This may well apply to the Earl of Oxford, who probably wrote twenty plays before the age of thirty. Nearly

---

Locrine **has been attributed to both Robert Greene and George Peele, while Sidney Lee suggested that its author also wrote the anonymous** ***King Leir*****. Eric Sams assigned it to Shakespeare on both external and internal evidence. He placed great credence in the title-page attribution on the grounds that the printer, Thomas Creede, published at least four canonical Shakespeare plays.**

Dean Keith Simonton

It is safe to say that of the twelve additional plays that I assign to Oxford, more than a fifth are of a lower level of quality than those in the orthodox canon. An explanation for this, the appearance of a group of substandard plays in the output of an acknowledged genius, lies in a theory advanced by the psychologist Dean Keith Simonton.

Creative artists of the first rank, Simonton argues, are generally extremely productive. Oxford and the other playwrights mentioned, as well as Moliere, Strindberg, Shaw and Lorca, may be rightly called compulsive writers. Because they create so many works, the probability is very good that many will be of the highest quality. Simonton calls this "the "equal-odds rule"—quality, or creativity, being a function of quantity, or high productivity (184, 255). Reinforcing this probability is the improvement in skill with practice.

An analogy would be target shooting. If you shoot fifty times at a target, your chances of getting ten bull's eyes

half—those published anonymously or bearing only the initials "W. S."—have been refused a place in the canon by almost all orthodox scholars on grounds of quality.

Although, as a rule, these plays are indeed inferior to the accepted ones, orthodox scholars are peculiarly unwilling to recognize any Shakespeare juvenilia. Even his earliest accepted dramas reveal, at the least, a journeyman's skill at creating credible characters and compelling plots. It stands to reason that this prolific playwright, before he wrote *Comedy of Errors* or *Titus Andronicus*, or whatever was the earliest canonical play, may well have written a bad one, and very likely several.

Moreover, there is little or no agreement about the actual authors of these anonymous plays, suggesting that there is some obstacle to identifying the author as Shakespeare. That obstacle appears to be an excess of "bardolatry," a refusal to acknowledge that Shakespeare could write a bad play or scene or line. This refusal leads to assigning substandard

acts, scenes, and even passages in canonical plays to other, less talented, writers under the rubric of "collaboration."

In Part 2 of this paper, I will propose a chronology of the Oxfordian canon, and present evidence that he began writing in his early teens. Oxford's earliest plays have large casts, and tend to be carefully constructed, with well-integrated sub-plots. They reveal an unpolished but powerful poet with a taste for image and metaphor, and an ear for declamatory language. But his verse also tends to be pedestrian and repetitive—too clever and too bombastic. We can be sure that Oxford didn't always write like Shakespeare.

Works Cited

Auden, W. H., ed. *19th Century British Minor Poets*. New York: Delacorte, 1966.

Berney, Charles V. "Who wrote *The Spanish Tragedy*?" *Shakespeare Matters* v. 4:2 (Winter 2005) pp. 1-18.

----- "Hidden Allusions in Oxford's *Spanish Tragedy*." *Shakespeare Matters*. v. 4:4 (Summer 2005) pp. 6-11.

Bertram, Paul: *Shakespeare and The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Rutgers, 1965.

Boas, Frederick S., ed. *The Works of Thomas Kyd*. Oxford U. P. 1901.

Capell, Edward*: Mr. William Shakespeare his comedies, histories, and tragedies*, etc. (1767-8) 10 v. New York: AMS Press, 1968.

Chambers, Edmund K.: *The Elizabethan Stage.* 4 v. Oxford University Press, 1923.

-----: *William Shakespeare, Fact and Problems*. 2 v. OUP, 1930.

Clark, Eva Turner*: Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays*. New York, 1931.

Collins, J. Churton: *Essays and Studies*. London: Macmillan, 1895.

Crawford, Charles: "*The Authorship of* Arden of Faversham" in *Collectanea*. Shakespeare Head Press, 1906.

Egan, Michael*: The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One: A Newly Authenticated Play by William Shakespeare*. Lewiston, NY 2006.

Evans, G. Blakemore, ed. *The Riverside Shakespeare.* Boston 1997.

Gidley, Fran: "Shakespeare in Composition: Evidence for Oxford's Authorship of 'The Book of Sir Thomas More'" *The Oxfordian* v. 6 (2003) pp. 29-54.

Greer, Clayton A. "Shakespeare's Use of *'The Famous Victories of Henry V'*." Notes and Queries. v. 199 (June 1954) pp. 238-41.

Greg, W. W., ed. *The Book of Sir Thomas More*. Malone Society Reprints. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911.

-----. "Autograph Plays by Anthony Munday." *Modern Language Review*. v. 8 (1913) pp. 89-90.

Hart, Alfred. *Shakespeare and the Homilies.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1934.

Jackson, MacDonald P. "Materials for an Edition of *Arden of Faversham*" B. Litt. thesis, Oxford 1963.

-----. "Shakespearean Features of the Poetic Style of *Arden of Faversham*." Archiv fur das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen v. 230 (1993) pp. 279-304.

-----. "Compound Adjectives in *Arden of Faversham*." Notes and Queries v. 53 (2006) pp. 51-55.

-----. "Shakespeare and the Quarrel Scene in *Arden of Faversham*" Shakespeare Quarterly v. 57:3 (Fall 2006) pp. 249-84

-----. "Parallels and Poetry: Shakespeare, Kyd, and *Arden of Faversham*." *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* v. 23 (2010) pp. 17-33.

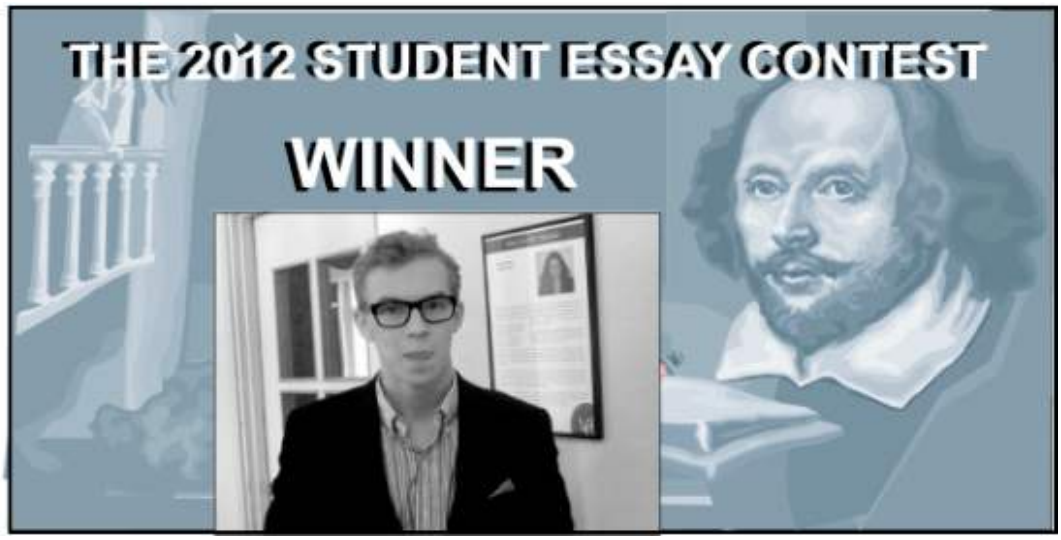
Jiménez, Ramon. "The True Tragedy of *Richard the Third*: Another Early History Play by Edward de Vere." *The Oxfordian*. v. 7 (2004) pp. 115-52.

-----. "*The Troublesome Raigne of John, King of England: Shakespeare's First Version of* King John." *The Oxfordian*. v. 12 (2010) pp. 21-55.

-----. "The Playwright's Progress: Edward de Vere and the Two Shrew Plays." *The Oxfordian.* v. 14 (2012) pp. 47-73.

Lee, Sidney, ed. *The chronicle history of King Leir: the original of Shakespeare's* 'King Lear.' Chatto & Windus, 1909.

Malone, Edmond. *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare*. Third Variorum Edition. James Boswell, ed. 21 v. London:1821.
Maxwell, Baldwin. *Studies in the Shakespeare Apocrypha*. New York: 1956.
Melchiori, Giorgio. *King Edward III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
Merriam, Thomas 'The Authorship of "Sir Thomas More"' *Assoc. Literary and Linguistic Computing Bulletin*. v. 10 (1982) pp. 1-7.
Pitcher, Seymour M. *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship of* "The Famous Victories." New York 1962.
Ribner, Irving. *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*. New York: 1965.
Ross, T. W. ed. *The Spanish Tragedy*. Berkeley: University of California 1968.
Sams, Eric (ed): *Shakespeare's Lost Play*, Edmund Ironside 1986.
Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.
-----: *The Real Shakespeare* II. (2008) http://ericsams.org/index.php/on-shakespeare/books-on-shakespeare/828-the-real-shakespeare-ii
von Schlegel, August W. *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* London:1846.
Simonton, Dean Keith. *Greatness: Who Makes History and Why*. New York: Guilford Press, 1994.
Slater, Eliot: "The Vocabulary of *Edward III*" Diss., London Univ. 1982.
-----: The Problem of the *Reign of King Edward III*: A Statistical Approach. C.U.P, 1988.
Southworth, John: Shakespeare*, The Player, A Life in the Theatre*. Stroud, Gloucester: Sutton, 2000.
Swinburne, A. C.: *A Study of Shakespeare.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1880.
Ward, Bernard M. "*The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*: Its Place in Elizabethan Dramatic Literature." *Review of English Studie*s. v. 4 (July 1928) pp. 27-94.



Bringing Truth to Light: Why it Matters Who Wrote William's Words

Jacob Karlsson Lagerros

According to the legend, Richard Burbage, the most famous actor of Shakespeare's day, was once asked to visit a lady at home, dressed as Richard III. When Burbage arrived at the Lady's door, he loudly exclaimed that "King Richard III is come." However, he did not receive the expected response. From within the apartment resounded a surprising—but all too familiar—voice, proclaiming "Please inform the gentleman that William the Conqueror came before Richard III" (Chambers, 212). But it was not the voice of a conqueror. It was the voice of another William, of even greater reputation. There exist few—if any—literary figures of such magnitude as William Shakespeare. His writing has had an enormous impact on the ideological development of the modern western civilization. Linguistics, ethics, literature

Jacob Karlsson Lagerros ***is a 17-year-old student at Viktor Rydberg Gymnasium in Stockholm Sweden. His essay was selected from more than 60 submissions.*** **Jacob** ***was awarded the $1,000 cash prize in person by York University*** **Professor Don Rubin.**

2nd Place: **Rachel Woods** ***of Franklin, TN.***

3rd Place: **Hayley Hohman** ***of Mead, WA.***

Honorable Mentions: **Catherine Wu** ***of High Point, NC; Olivia Barnett of New York City; Rachel Grewcock from Longborough High School, UK***

Judges**: Dr. Robin Fox, Dr. Ren Draya, and Ms. Sarah Smith**

and philosophy would not have been the same if he had not decided to put pen to paper in Elizabethan England. Yet, as in the case with Burbage, it has not always been clear exactly who it is that hides in that house of literary masterpieces. In the last centuries literary scholars have begun doubting the traditional view on the authorship of the Shakespeare canon, even denying that it really was William himself who wrote it. This meticulous scrutiny has prompted some to claim that "it doesn't matter who wrote Shakespeare". However, that supposition is completely unfounded. Shakespeare's identity is highly relevant, and that is due to three main reasons: Firstly, it is intrinsically tied to how we perceive and understand his work. Secondly, due to the size of his legacy his life story has long-reaching social, cultural and ethical implications. And thirdly, attributing Shakespeare's work to the wrong author would cause radical changes to those societal structures that are built upon his legacy. Shakespeare matters because the impact he has had on western civilization is too vital to be constructed on a lie.

Understanding Shakespeare's Work Through his Person

Is it possible to understand Shakespeare without knowing who he was? One might surely understand him in the sense of knowing what is happening on the stage, who is who and what he intends with his often peculiar language (doubling adjectives when one would suffice, inventing words, etc.). But can one really perceive what, so to speak, made the plays what they are? What wretched anger or soothing love was it that he channeled and shackled within the iambic pentameter? From what steaming abyss of emotion did Lear and Iago burst into being? The answers to these questions vary depending on who is the claimed author.

Different attributions also alter the response to another significant problem: Why did Lear and Iago burst into being at all? Shakespeare's message and ideological agenda undoubtedly relies on what person he was. Just as irony and sarcasm may be undetectable if done by a certain person in a certain context, and completely obvious in another; the private life of Shakespeare say a great deal about what his characters tell us when they are not directly speaking. The authorship question is undeniably meaningful since our entire perception, view and understanding of the raison d'être for the Shakespeare canon transform when we attribute it to different writers. The topic of understan-ding furthermore provides additional evidence for the need of an authorship debate. Comprehending the work is not merely to perform an elaborate exegesis on a given text. Instead, the process has often been helped and advanced through a method of "intertextual" interpretation: the act of reading the plays not as sepa-rate entities, but as components of a whole; merging different worlds and stories together to form a Shakespearean universe of lives and ideas. This process is extremely useful, as it illuminates nuances and themes that are too subtle to perceive in a single text. However, it is also dependent on the life of the writer. He assumes the role of god over this new-born universe; every move and action has meaning not only in its worldly direct context, but also as the result of a divine motive and will. Your reason, endeavor and ideas—as is easily perceived throughout history—changes drastically depending on your god.

The Social, Cultural and Ethical Impact of Shakespeare's identity

Why doubt that William Shakspere (who also spelled it Shakspere Shak-spere, Shakspe and Shakspeare) of Stratford-upon-Avon wrote the Shakespeare canon? What skepticism made Mark Twain reflect on the Stratfordian arguments in his merciless 1909 *satire Is Shakespeare Dead?*, finally stating that "an Eiffel Tower of artificialities rise sky-high from a very flat and very thin foundation of inconsequential facts" (Twain, Chapter III), few enough that "you could set them all down on a visiting-card" (Twain, Chapter II). Both Shakspere and his authorship rivals are long dead since, and neither has any distant relatives looking to regain their honor or rightful place in history. But the debate is persisting and growing, indicating how it is a subject cared about and revered by many. The main untraditional contestant for the authorship is Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, who lived between 1550 and 1604. In every part of the canon where Shakspere's life fails to explain the text, de Vere's elucidates it perfectly. The meticulous knowledge of Italian customs and locations, advanced legal terms and processes, royal intrigues and falconry present, is absolutely remote from Shakspere's life, yet corresponds perfectly to De Vere's. (*Shakespeare Fellowship*, Chapter 7)

There is however an unyielding reluctance to support the Oxford theory, even in the midst of a rampant maelstrom of evidence. It seems that a great many adherents to the orthodox tradition have erected romantic ideals as massive bulwarks against the Oxfordian floods. The bard from Avon gains support from the most unforeseen direction—Americanism. When the former editor of the Shakespeare Quarterly, Dr. Gail Kern Paster, argued the traditional view at a Smithsonian seminar in 2001, she summed up her final statement by appealing that "We as Americans have no reason" to doubt the authorship (Niederkorn). The alleged story of William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon is in fact intimately tied to the American dream. It is the story of a man who lacked education, world-experience and noble background, but instead was blessed with an unparalleled imagination and the pen of a god; who labored day and night to bring his dreams to life, and ended up buying the largest estate of his hometown—settling down as the hero of both his nation and generation (Twain, Chapter III). When Paul Edmondson of *The Guardian* writes a fierce defense of the Stratfordian viewpoint, he—just like Dr. Paster—cannot close without stating that "He didn't go to university. He wasn't an aristocrat. He was from fairly humble origins and worked hard at what he was good at." (Edmondson) Compare that to the image of the Earl of Oxford: notorious for his violent aggressiveness, rich at birth but impoverished at death, an aristocrat who ruined his estate through nothing else than his own carelessness (May, 5-7).

Americanism

This Americanism provides social reasons to why it actually matters who wrote "Shakespeare". For many people living today, the reading of *Macbeth* or *King Lear* is a mere act of wading and plowing, through endless archaisms and unintelligible soliloquies. The man behind the works appears as such a foreign figure, hiding in his linguistic swamps, that it seems impossible to find any satisfaction in his alien work. If then, however, that man is a character of

identification: if the reader can perceive someone like himself—sharing his struggles, joys and fears—behind the pen, those forbidding opuses immediately turn more appealing. It is a harsh truth that a majority of people simply will not read the manuscripts of a 400-year-old playwright for the sole sake of their poetry. Thus the story of Shakespeare's life matters, as it might spread (or hinder the spread of…) his work to those who otherwise never would have discovered it.

The Shakespeare Brand

Today Shakespeare is a brand; a trademark. In the modern culture of mainstream theatre, one does not merely watch a play, one watches a giant cultural industry has been built around that mysterious, distinctly English, intellectually ringing Shakespeare. Ponder the amount of tickets sold if a theatre were to stage two "different" plays the same night: *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare and *The Tragedy of the Danish Prince* by Edward de Vere. Poor Edward would have his masterpiece acted out in front of a vanishingly small gathering of brave *avant-gardists* and subtly giggling professors. Attributing Shakespeare's work to de Vere would (at least beyond dogmatic academia) turn out a seamless transition; however, reprinting it and replacing every mention of the traditional author would possibly ignite a commercial crisis. This issue is cultural, economic and pragmatic, pertaining in no way to artistic and esthetic subject matter, yet it cannot be overlooked.

The authorship dilemma is also an ethical one. Orthodox scholars like to claim that questioning the traditional attribution is an act of jealousy, an inability to cope with how a single man could possess such talent and produce such a vast array of brilliance. As the aforementioned Paul Edmondson puts it, "it denies the power of the human imagination". Because if Proust could and Tolstoy could, why could not Shakespeare? Taking a stance on the authorship dilemma suddenly means choosing a position in questions far exceeding its apparent realms. If you choose your author based on the text, you also commit to a certain view of human beings. What can a single man do? What possibilities does he have? How wide stretches the human imagination? To what extent do the birthplace conditions of a man determine his limits? One does not have to be a Stratfordian or Oxfordian to see that if we want to explain the author from his texts or *vice versa*, we commit to a grand ethical decision. To choose Shakespeare's identity means, in a sense, to choose your view of mankind.

The Consequences of Misattributing Shakespeare

To demonstrate what an impact a change of author might have on societies, look at the probably most influential text of all time—the Bible. Whenever a community withholds its holiness and claims it to be the word and will of God, its themes and notions spread like wildfire. Laws are constructed according to the teachings of Jesus, the style of psalms becomes the ideal way of writing poetry and the events of Noah's Ark and the Garden of Eden determine how history is constructed. Yet, at the advent of secularization—in other words, when the idea of the authorship changes from divine to dilettante—those societal structures are radically transformed. A change that is minimal within its direct context spawns a butterfly effect razing the systems that had been built upon it.

Even though the Stratford vs. Oxford debate does not concern divinity, a huge part of Western civilization does rest on Shakespeare's work. He gave us our language and our literature. He gave us a view of the history of his own age and had an impact on the history of his future. He taught practical ethics to millions of men and women. It would have devastating consequences for our entire conception of history if the traditional attribution of his work was wrong. In that case not only the direct Shakespearean institutions but also every idea and system built around him would crumble to pieces.

Why Shakespeare is Supposed not to Matter—and Why it is Absurd

When Mark Rylance, multiple Tony Award winner and longtime Shakespeare-interpreter, was faced with the dreaded question of the Shakespeare authorship he responded that "One of the fortunate things about this Shakespearian thing [authorship] is that it's totally unimportant". He refers to the "enormous personal pain and suffering" that had to be endured in order to craft those timeless masterpieces, and how the question deprives them of the attention they deserve. Those tales—playing out from the raging seas of Illyria to the haunted hallways of the castle Elsinore—are too vibrant and tragic, too magnificent and "full of sound and fury" to fade behind a pile of scholarly quibble. Shakespeare's poetry, not his identity, is what matters. Then why is not Rylance justified in his outburst? Is it not an axiom of esthetics that a true work of art must be able to persist apart of its creator? When a spectator is agonized by the grief of Othello, riveted by the madness of Hamlet or immersed in the "infinite jest" of *Twelfth Night*— how can anything make a difference but the very magic of the moment? There are however "more things in heaven and earth than are contained in Rylance's philosophy". In that exalted moment of experiencing the essence of drama there might not be much else that matters, yet plays of such magnitude as Shakespeare's has relevance far beyond stage of the Globe Theatre. The act of viewing the plays is only a part of a larger process. To claim that nothing matters but the text is to be ignorant of what literature is capable of. As noted earlier, Shakespeare extends far beyond his words.

A Mystery

The Bard of Avon is not the only author with universally celebrated writing but a life shrouded in mystery. There are pivotal figures in Western literature whose lives historians know close to nothing about. Homer, for example, who might be the single most important figure of ancient literature, has a biography veritably unknown beyond myth and legend. Yet his work is widely read, cherished and meticulously analyzed. There is an epitaph on the tomb of the great English architect, Sir Christopher Wren, that reads "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice."

Located in the heart of his *magnum opus*, St Paul's Cathedral, the inscription tells nothing about his life or virtues. It simply urges the observer to turn away: "If you seek his monument, look about you". Those words greatly elucidate the supposed relation between an artist and his art that would deny the importance of our question. Even if an author's life might change the way we understand his writings, what insight does it provide that we cannot do without? No one ever claimed *The Odyssey* to be incompre-

hensible because we lack concrete facts about Homer. Yet there is certain knowledge every scholar claims is crucial for that understanding—the knowledge of Antique culture and religion. If we then apply the same standards to Elizabethan era England, we find that what we need to comprehend its poets is its philosophy; its beliefs, rituals and customs. And when it comes to Elizabethan culture, we do know a lot. If there ever were texts with the ability to stand alone, resting only on their greatness and the zeitgeist that spawned them, would it not be Shakespeare's? However, this argument fails as the problem is not the mysterious circumstances of the poet's life, but rather the act of accidentally attributing his work to another poet—who furthermore may not even be a poet at all. Transferring the attribution of a work does not necessarily give us new insight into it, but it undoubtedly changes the view we already have. As noted above, the intrigues of Shakespeare's universe may not depend on who he was, but the meaning and message of it does.

Conclusion

It definitely does matter who wrote "Shakespeare". His work has had an undeniable importance in the creation of the modern society. An impact so large, in fact, that we cannot risk it to be based on a lie. Yet, in the end, the hunt for that elusive man may not even be about him. When asked if it matters who wrote Shakespeare, one might respond that "Yes, it does indeed—the same way it matters who wrote the gospels and who signed the Declaration of Independence". Every false prophet ultimately faces his iconoclasm. The fundamental principle of all academia, and even knowledge itself, has since the foundation of the Academy of Plato been to search for truth and pursue history solely for its own sake and value. In order to understand the postmodern ocean currently whirling us away, we first have to comprehend the movements of the earth that enraged the sea in the first place. As that enigmatic English bard—who at the present moment shall go unnamed—verses in The Rape of Lucrece (lines 939-940): "Time's glory is to calm contending kings, / To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light."

Works cited

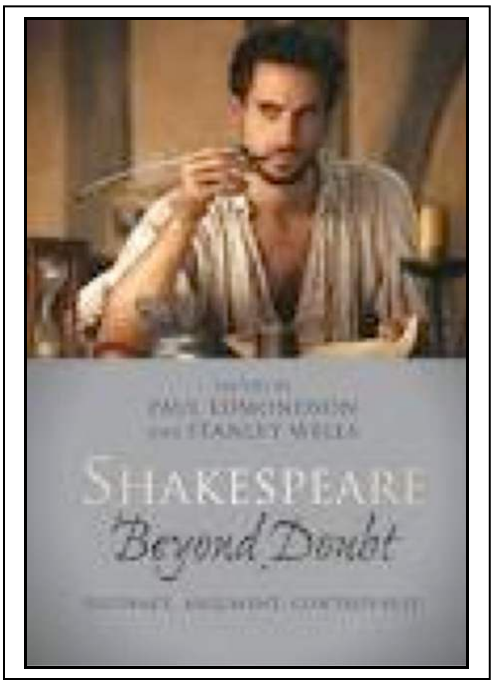
"A Beginner's Guide to the Shakespeare Authorship Problem" Shakespeare Fellowship site, 16 Dec. 2012.
Chambers, E.K. *William Shakespeare. A Study of Facts and Problems.* OUP 1930)
Edmondson, Paul. "Who wrote Shakespeare's plays – and does it matter?" *The Guardian.* 5 Sep 2011. Web. 16 Dec 2012.
May, Steven W. "The Poems of Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex" *Studies in Philology*. UNC77, winter 1980.
Niederkorn, William S. "A Historical Whodunit: If Shakespeare didn't, who did?" *New York Times*, 10 Feb 2001.
Rylance, Mark. Interview from Anonymous press conference, 2011. Web. 16 Dec. 2012. /www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcPGi1DQkag.
Twain, Mark. *Is Shakespeare Dead*? Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1910.
Stritmatter, Roger. "Is This the Bard We See Before Us? Or Someone Else?" *The Washington Post*. 18 Mar 2007.
Shakespeare, William. *The Rape of Lucrece.* 1594.
The Corporation of the Cathedral Church of St Paul. www.stpauls.co.uk

The Fool Hath Said in His Heart, There is No Shakespeare

Michael Egan

Shakespeare Beyond Doubt: *Evidence, Argument, Controversy*, Ed. Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells (Cambridge U.P., 2013)

Shakespeare as usual had both the insight and the words to express it: "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." Edmondson's and Wells' title is a shade too emphatic, too certainly certain, for a question that requires this impressive assemblage of distinguished Shakespeareans all baying the same defensive chorus.*



It seems ironic also that the cover of their new book features a still of Joseph Fiennes from *Shakespeare In Love*, a figure fictional in every sense and known to be so by any conceivable reader. Deconstructing its Saussurian *langues* and ambiguous *paroles*, the editors' unwitting statement is that their anthology concerns a fake, an actor who plays the part of Shakespeare. This sounds familiar. Unconsciously the cover affirms what its authors seek to deny, a kind of visual Freudian slip, classically manifesting uncertainty and deceit. Like Wilhelm Reich's body armor, their choices and decisions convey feelings anxiously concealed.◊

Even more revealing, the book's frontispiece is Max Beerbohm's famous cartoon, "William Shakespeare, his method of work", showing Bacon quietly slipping *Hamlet* to a sneaky Shakespeare accepting it behind his back. I'd have expected that one rather in the companion volume, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* edited by Shahan and Waugh. But no: for them the matter is too serious. In Edmondson and Wells it's gallows' humor, a hollow laugh, whistling through the graveyard, a statement unconsciously contradicting their book's surface objectives.

Notice too the complex semiology implied by the choice of words, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, in effect the cover-picture's caption. Again it bears the hallmarks of an involuntarily reveal-

* There are some notable absences, however, including Profs. Harold Bloom, Stephen Greenblatt, and Sir Brian Vickers. They must surely have been invited to participate.

◊ See for example Morten Bartnaes: "Freud's 'The Uncanny' and Deconstructive Criticism: Intellectual Uncertainty and Delicacy of Perception" (*Psychoanalysis and History*, January 2010, pp. 29-54).

ing Freudian *shlep*, the unconscious dragging in of a revealing new sense. The Id, that is, what they really think but repress, tricks both the Ego and the Superego. Their title says that Shakespeare, meaning his authorship of the plays and poems, is affirmatively Beyond Doubt. But on reflection, the proposition is clearly not beyond *Reasonable* doubt—the absent word is unconsciously evoked by the legal phrase followed by "Evidence, Argument, Controversy." What would Derrida have made of it?

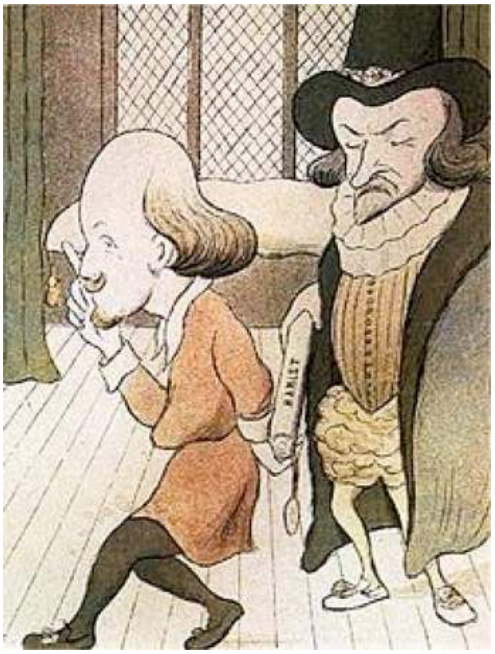
Reasonable Doubt

Suddenly everything pivots on the subtext of that pregnant and elusive word, "reasonable." Its absent presence is meant to be emphatic and to play off the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt, though what it more insistently does is open up the very question it seeks to cauterize. By deleting "reasonable" for rhetorical effect, the words *Beyond Doubt* ironically focus attention on the book's own softest and most vulnerable point: How reasonable, after all—how likely and humanly possible—is it that an inexperienced provincial lad with a 16th-century grammar-school education (at best), grew up to be the greatest poet and dramatist in world history?

It is *the* central question, the one upon which the authorship disagreement rests. Prof. Carol Rutter of Warwick University and *SBD* contributor on the matter, poses it directly, and more than once: "How did he do it?"

Magic or Deceit

The assumption is that somehow he did, because of the anterior presumption that he authored the plays. In other words, Rutter concedes that the author didn't



Max Beerbohm: 'William Shakespeare, His Method of Work'

simply go through life warbling his native woodnotes wild, etc.

This is a big concession from the other side, which at least since Milton could see no further than Jonson's "small Latin and less Greek." Finally they recognize Shakespeare's erudition, though this creates the further problem of then accounting for it. According to *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, the poet-playwright's early education far surpassed that of Michelangelo, Beethoven, Mozart, Leonardo, Alexander the Great, and frankly even Jesus Christ himself. Their abilities were all recognized early and legendarily encouraged—among the few things known about Jesus' childhood is that he astonished the rabbis with his learning.

You'd think somebody in Stratford would have noticed the most powerful intelligence of the millennium, but no. You'd think Rutter would have noticed that anomaly, but no. Whether young

William crept willingly or unwillingly to school, he certainly left his mighty intellect behind despite a rich, varied and challenging academic smorgasbord including "what today would constitute the curriculum of a university classics degree."

Yes, like top-notch Harvard or at least Warwick, her own pretty good school. This is because she has to accept the documented fact that William Shaksper or even Shakespeare attended neither Oxford nor Cambridge (just as well, she implies) nor even the Inns of Court. Yet he obviously possessed, like his own witches, more than mortal knowledge.

So again: How did he do it? Rutter's answer is a professional disgrace, given the crucial importance of this matter. She supplies but a single reference, her colleague Peter Mack's *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (2002).

This is a good but limited volume which frankly contradicts Rutter at several points and does not support her general claims of extraordinary heuristic excellence at Stratford. Perhaps for this reason Rutter cites it in the vaguest and most general way: "Throughout this section I am depending on," etc., leaving the impression that her asseverations are valid.

She provides however not a single quote, page or document reference and, in a crucial qualifying end note, dismisses the breathtaking syllabus she has described, as "aspirational" rather than "actual." So Mack's lists tell us nothing about what was actually studied. Despite this, Rutter claims that at the King's School ca. 1570 Shakspere's large and comprehensive soul would have been sufficiently exposed to all or most of the classical greats and also to

> ways of ethical thinking and of expressing [his] thinking…habits of mind that produced ways of thinking, talking, writing, arguing, feeling; habits of reflection but also of activity (Rutter, *SBD* 135).

Given such an intellectual feast, young William's genius would have blossomed like Juliet's hopes. Typically, Rutter does not ask why nothing remains of the truly first heirs of his invention, nor any trace of the creative excitement he must surely have experienced—and communicated—on first looking, like Keats, into the work of his historic equals, Homer, Virgil, Aristotle, Sophocles, Plato, Euripides! And let's not forget his favorite Ovid, and the Geneva Bible, studied in such detail they stayed indelibly in his mind for the rest of his life.

Scholars and Pedants

To prove that Shakespeare attended grammar school, which Oxfordians don't dispute,[*] Stratfordians often cite those scenes where the masters are portrayed. What's overlooked is that these mannered pedants are uniformly mocked and satirized and were, if truly drawn from life, quite incapable of teaching the remarkable syllabus Rutter imagines.

In fact, if we believe her, the King's School syllabus went far beyond Warwick's or even Harvard's Classics Department (check the websites) by including, for good measure, their Philosophy, English and Comparative Lit departments too. She asserts that in this extraordinary educational environment Shakespeare was even taught

> history and biography; poetry, comedy and tragedy; moral essays and orations; [and] the epic

[*] See Robin Fox: *Shakespeare's Education* Laugwitz Verlag (2012)

though whose exactly she does not say. That's not her point. Her sweeping, undocumented gestures, like a tour guide, are meant to assure us that, as it were, All Is True. The quaint little birthplace, Ann Hathaway's romantic cottage, the schoolroom which explains everything.

What she more seriously evades is discussing the documented uses grown-up William made of his matchless education: I mean his rapacity as a businessman. It is known, but quietly forgotten among the Wells and Bates and Rutters, that in Stratford Shakspere hoarded grain and malt and barley during times of famine, then sold what he had to his starving neighbors at an outrageous profit.

That's quite a remarkably ethical activity, doing unto others before they do unto you. I invite Prof. Rutter to specify other instances of his humane and educated moral spirit, the spirit of the plays—his unforgiving litigiousness, perhaps, like Shylock practicing usury and demanding his bond; or illegally evading minor taxes; or threatening others with grievous bodily harm; or participating in the notorious Enclosure Acts, which privatized public lands; or, above all, his purchase for the equivalent of one-quarter million US dollars (£440 Elizabethan) the right to collect "tithes" or taxes, from local tenements or "pelting farms."

The term "pelting farm" is familiar to readers of *Richard II*. It also appears—in fact originates—in *Richard II, Part One*, where the practice is described in detail. Cash-poor landowners "farmed out" groups of villages or other units to entrepreneurs like Shakspere who paid up front the estimated taxes that might be collected over a specified period of years. In return they got the right to recoup and of course profit from the arrangement. Shakspere's lease, lovingly preserved under glass in the Stratford Records Office, ran for 92 years, "four-score years plus twelve," in the legal formula of the day. He died one of the wealthiest men in Warwickshire, the head of a vast financial empire based on property, usury, grain hoarding and tax collecting.

And Yet

This man, Stratfordians maintain, wrote the following while hoarding grain during a famine:

> Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp.
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
> And show the heavens more just.

And

> Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
> That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
> Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly.
> So distribution should undo excess,
> And each man have enough.

When he died in 1616, after greedily gorging himself, his fellow citizens erected an appropriate memorial. It showed a dour man unsmilingly clutching a bag of hoarded grain. Many years later, after he became Shakespeare, it was turned into a writing desk and a quill pen stuffed into his tight little fist.

Bill Clinton and Frank McCourt

But Shakspere's tithing business lay in the future. What should be significant to anyone considering his childhood and education is the fact that during the perhaps seven years his budding genius was exposed to the great and the good, he neither said, did nor wrote anything anyone considered worth recording. Not an oration, fragment of poetry, piercing observation or even a vaguely witty comment. His translations back and forth between English and the Latin classics were as pedestrian as the next boy's, his ways of "ethical thinking, talking, writing, arguing" totally forgettable—forgotten. No schoolmaster ever asked him in surprise, as one later asked the young Frank McCourt, "Did you write this?"

It's said that when Bill Clinton was at school the other kids would follow him home just to watch him think. We may suppose that the young Shakespeare was at least as intellectually charismatic as our former president, but no one seems to have noticed. Equally, his juvenilia, which the rich pedagogical environment of the King's New School must surely have encouraged, has been lost, along with all and any other personal writings, drafts, mss. and letters (excepting that notoriously illiterate will). We have even lost the amusing little volume of wise saws and pithy quotations Ms Rutter, in one of her flights, imagines him compiling from the precious and extremely expensive books his kindly, cane-wielding school-masters allowed him to take home and read by the fire of an evening.

Edmondson's Folly

There are further anomalous elements in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*. For instance, the editors polemically relabel as "anti-Shakespearian" anyone who queries their current line on the SAQ. This is seriously troubling, not only because that line is in transition (see below), but because it deliberately shifts the debate from academics to public relations.

Initially proposed *fausse-innocence* as merely descriptive, a helpful clarification, "anti-Shakespearian" quickly reveals itself as shorthand for the evil and malevolent forces which *SBD* contributors believe are hell-bent—and they do mean to the ninth region itself—on destroying the Bard.

Their fears, though absurdly exaggerated, are genuine enough, for as we shall see the dominant *SBD* mode is paranoia. This doesn't mean we're not out to get them! Oxfordians do seek the end of the Shakspere myth. At one point however Wells and Edmondson go all Chicken Little, running in panic from the straw-filled bogeyman—the Anti-Shake—their fevered imaginings have created. How in the night is a bush supposed a bear![°]

But the difference between them and the frightened chicken is that they have PhDs and thus a plan. And it's a good one, a dangerous one: the complete suppression of all debate. If this sounds farfetched, note that they have already pretty well achieved the silencing of most contrary voices and opinions. In practice this means denying the press, radio, TV, college appointments, awards and main-stream publishing outlets, including journals, to anyone even suspected of thinking independently about the authorship question. It's a thought-crime.

Conspiracy Theorists

Edmondson's editorial chapter is the source of the paranoia characterizing

[°] One is tempted to add that these gentlemen are neither lovers nor poets.

SBD. "Shakespeare has enemies," he begins conspiratorially, glancing over his shoulder. Is this a conspiracy theory and is Edmondson a conspiracy theorist?

This frankly riveting opening is followed by the increasingly forceful demand that we all just drop the upsetting subject. Why can't people simply accept the Beyond Doubt assurance that Shakespeare created everything magically? Why is that so hard to understand? He was a genius. Fiat *Hamlet* et *Hamlet* erat!

After this, we are not surprised to discover that Edmondson is also an Anglican priest, though shallow analogies should be avoided. Nonetheless his self-righteous fury is directed not only at the benighted atheists and agnostics but any waverers. And that means you!

The fool hath said in his heart, there is no Shakespeare. This proves discussion is dangerous and destructive. The devil may cite scripture for his purpose, or in this case the sacred *Works*, and thou shalt dine with him using a long spoon, etc. The anti-Shakes, Edmondson continues, may deceitfully claim that they just want to talk, but their real intent—like Joe McCarthy he pulls this one right out of his aspirations—is creating a situation where "everyone can have their say."

That's right. The face of iniquity is free speech, and virtue lies in putting an end to it.

I wonder whether CUP's editors checked Edmondson's text before approving it? If they didn't they should be fired, because that's their job; and if they did, even more so. If Professor John Mack could be threatened with dismissal from Harvard for listening credulously to the accounts of alien abductees, what are the responsibilities of an equally great university sanctioning intellectual fascism? Does its press really support the suppression of free debate?

For the Head of Education and Research at Stratford, then—what titular irony!—Freedom is Slavery and Ignorance literally Strength.

This is because, as he unabashedly declares, informed, free-speaking people might actually "propose alternative nominees." Worse still, if "everyone has their say," other than Edmondson, etc., students and lay people alike might actually "feel empowered" and could even—OMG!—"contradict authorities."

Yes, your grace, they might. It's called thinking independently.

The New Disintegrationism

Shakespeare Beyond Doubt is nonetheless a significant book. Read carefully. we may detect subtle refinements in the traditional case. These *sotto voce* qualifications are attempts to paper over the cracks appearing in an edifice under pressure.

A major surprise is the acknowledgement that Shakespeare might not, after all, have written Shakespeare, or at least not as much as we previously thought.

The suggestion that the traditional authorship theory needs revision is made repeatedly, especially in "Shakespeare as Collaborator," by John Jowett. The new line is that the dramatist was basically a team member who worked extensively with others, and not necessarily *primus inter pares*. Poor scenes or passages must be by someone else. Shakespeare himself is always at his best.

Stylometrics

The second new element is the consolidation of Stylometrics as the principal methodology supporting the idea of Team Shakespeare, what we could call Collaborationism. Despite the work of

Sir E.K. Chambers and the history of disintegrationist theory, Collaborationism is being vigorously promoted as a modern discovery. It is however merely a bespoke overcoat newly tailored to look fashionable.

No one reasonably doubts that a certain amount of rewriting, updating and collaborating went on in Shakespeare's day. Henslowe's diary makes that clear. What is new in *SBD*, however, corollary with the incorporation of Stylometrics, is the expansion of the team concept. As we've seen, Shakespeare apparently wrote a lot less than was previously thought, and his supposed collaborators—Marlowe and Peele in the early years, Chettle, Dekker, Heywood, Middleton, Wilkins, and Fletcher in the later—were responsible for considerably more. We're also assured by stylometry that Jonson and Shakespeare, apparently at different times, recast *The Spanish Tragedy*, which is quite a precision tool. *Macbeth* and *Measure for Measure* were revised and added to by others after their author's death.*

The difficulty with Stylometrics is that its data are almost impossible to verify. Students confront pages and pages of small-print numbers or word lists in columns, representing years of work and requiring a similar effort to check. There is no uniformity in editions or texts used, although these often vary markedly, and no consistent or proven methodologies, appropriate sample size or clear distinctions drawn between fact and opinion. Statistical tests of dubious relevance are sometimes applied and the results treated as certainties. Analyses depend crucially on the authority of the researcher who reports his/her conclusions. The outcome is that stylometric studies are embraced by those who like their results and rejected by those who don't.

Among the additional causes of confusion in applied stylometrics are the vagaries and often opposing results each new set of testable criteria generates. Some literary statisticians count function words like *and* and *but*, others the number of pauses per line, or the position of the iambic caesura, or the number of spaces between the words.

These criteria are arbitrary and frequently contradict each other. The most notorious case is "A Funeral Elegy," famously ascribed, and then even more famously unascribed, to Shakespeare. As Eric Sams pointed out, advocates on both sides deployed computerized stylometrics to arrive at irreconcilably contradicttory results.

Shahan and Waugh's *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* includes as an appendix a devastating critique of stylometrics by Ramon Jiménez. He cites example after example of stylometrical conclusions flatly contradicting one another, depending on the program, the researcher's assumptions and/or the statistical tests employed.

Clearly we have not done enough to take on stylometric theory *qua* theory. It's not whether a journalist like Joel Klein reveals himself in his stylistic tics, Donald Foster proved that he does. But can an artist as complex, varied and above all as unique as Shakespeare be caught in the self-same net? The same Foster using the same methods proved that he could not. I think this is one way forward for us.

* But if Shakespeare, why not Oxford ? Elsewhere in *SBD* Alan Nelson mocks the seventeenth earl, but again has nothing to say about more recent discoveries.

The Bard of Stratford

The third major concession in *SBD*, though it is flatly at odds with the rest of the book, is the insistence that Shakespeare is inseparable from his social and psychological contexts.

This is self-evidently true, both of him and indeed any individual, yet ever since James Shapiro's *Contested Will* its opposite has been one of cornerstones of the Stratfordian hypothesis. Shapiro found what to non-Stratfordians is obvious: there's no connection between Shakespeare's art and his documented life. Putting it another way, Shakspere the ruthless businessman cannot be found in the *Collected Works*. That's because he was never there, of course, but since this is currently unthinkable by Shapiro and the establishment, they declare the whole effort illicit. Reading a text in context is a basic literary-critical maneuver, but in the unique case of Shakespeare, the practice is currently inadmissible.

Except when it is convenient to admit it. In their eagerness to label their opponents Shakespeare-haters, Wells and Edmondson insist that he was, after all, inextricably the product of Stratford town. People who claim otherwise are so pathetically wrong they can only be described as "anti-Shakespearians."

> In the past the term has been "anti-Stratfordian," which allows the work attributed to Shakespeare to be separated from the social and cultural context of its author… The term concedes that it is possible to separate an artist from his or her background and cultural context. (*Shakespeare Beyond Doubt,* xii.)

No, no, not at all; in fact, quite the reverse. Non- or anti-Stratfordians remove the town from the man, not the man from the town. They do this so that both he and his work may be resettled in their correct time and place, London and the court of Elizabeth I. Sixteenth-century Stratford, whatever the exaggerated glories of its educational resources, could never have produced the poet-playwright called Shakespeare, with his unique range of reading, interests, musical skills, culture and experience.

Two Different Men

Carol Rutter again tries by rhetorical sleight of hand to suggest that everything the poet learned beyond school

> he got from books, not from experience: travel in Italy, the geography and customs of Venice; Mediterranean shipwrecks; Cleopatra's spectacular arrival at Cydnus; fratricide; witchcraft; men turned into asses.

It's cunningly and disingenuously done, deliberately confusing in a rapid mélange information Shakespeare can only have found in books, like men turned into asses, with what could only have been lived, like his detailed knowledge of the *Commedia dell'arte* or the vulgarities of demotic French.

On the other hand Stratford could easily, and historically did, produce Shakspere the grain-dealer and tax collector. But the man who wrote those plays, that poetry? Never.

The only reasonable conclusion is that we are dealing with two different men whose identities have somehow become confused. How this happened and why is a major Oxfordian project. Trying to stifle this research and its publication is Big Stratford, watching you and you and you.

Any thinking person worth his or her salt should immediately start inquiring.

Historic Toronto Conference Unites SOS, SF

Richard Joyrich

The Ninth Annual Joint Conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship was held in Toronto, Ontario, October 17-20, 2013.This marked the second occasion a conference was held outside the United States, and the first when one was sponsored partially by universities (Canada's York University and the University of Guelph).

Thursday, October 17

Priscilla Costello

Astrologist Priscilla Costello noted the many references and allusions to astrology in Shakespeare. He may have obtained his knowledge from John Dee and/or Gerolamo Cardano.

She compared star charts for Oxford and Shakspere. The latter's points to business, an appreciation of the beauty of nature and the arts and a strong power of imagination.

Ron Halstead

Citing the harsh treatment of John Heyward for writing *Henry IV* and of Ben Jonson for *Sejanus*, Halstead argued that *Julius Caesar* was a dangerous play in dangerous times. Like Heyward, he used Tacitus's *Annals of Imperial Rome* as a source. The writer of *Julius Caesar* had to remain hidden. Halstead also reminded us that Oxford had access to the French translation of Plutarch's *Lives* as well as Tacitus's work, while the commentary on it by Justus Lipsius in the 1570s. Annotations in his Geneva Bible also show an interest in the dangers of tyranny.

Wally Hurst

Hurst set the tone for much of the rest of the conference with his talk, "What's your authority for that statement?" He focused on the nature of external or "historical" evidence, several fallacies of thinking, and cognitive biases. It is of the utmost importance to ask who, what, where, when, why and how about the writing of any historical document/ to properly assess its value in an inquiry. Hurst provided several examples of how this can be accomplished.

Hanno Wember

Wember, from Germany, presented recent work by his colleague **Robert Detobel**, who unfortunately could not attend. He did an excellent job. Why was Oxford never made a Knight of the Garter? Perhaps it was his theatre interests, including public acting.

A possible reason for this "outcast state" (as he puts it often in his writings) is de Vere's connection to the theater, including acting in public ("made myself a motley to the view," Sonnet 110). This was a serious breach of the "aristocratic behavioral code. De Vere needed a "front" for his theater activities and also a "mask" for his acting. William Shakspere of Stratford seems to have been selected for this purpose. This helps explain why "William Shakespeare" is listed both as an author and as an actor in published versions of plays.

Wember also showed a new German film, *The Naked Shakespeare*, about the authorship question and its cultural importance. Among other things, the movie

discusses Italian references in Shakespeare and concludes that the author must have traveled there.°

Friday, October 18

Heward Wilkinson

Since **Ron Hess** was unable to give his scheduled presentation, Heward Wilkinson from the U.K. discussed the contributions of Coleridge and others in defining "authorial consciousness." There is no sign that William Shaksper of Stratford embodied any such consciousness, though plenty that Oxford did.

Michael Egan

Egan discussed *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, then turned to the recent "discovery" by English professors at Aberystwyth University of Shakspere's grain hoarding and other ruthless business activities. Their research paints a picture in opposition to the traditional account. They themselves are forced to the conclusion: "Shakespeare the grain-hoarder has been redacted from history so that Shakespeare the creative genius could be born." This sounds a lot like the "conspiracy theory" Oxfordians are often accused of (see Cutler, below).

Tom Regnier

Attorney Tom Regnier discussed Clarkson and Warren's *The Law of Property in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama* (1942). This frequently referenced book has profoundly but misleadingly shaped readers' views of Shakespeare and the Law. Regnier's new analysis shows that while Ben Jonson (say) may have used more legal terms than Shakespeare, his are rhetorical lists without any real evidence that he understood them. But Shakespeare "thinks like a lawyer," employing legal terms as metaphors and abstractions in addition to their actual definitions.

Clarkson and Warren also claim Shakespeare used legal terms incorrectly but, Reignier said, Shakespeare was right and they were wrong.

Gerit Quealey

Gerit Quealey, assisted by two theater students from York University, pointed out that knowing more about the author of the plays helps actors to interpret and perform them. She illustrated this with examples performed by the students who did a great job.

Quealey went on to discuss some of her findings regarding the tense relationship between Sir Philip Sidney and Edward de Vere. Not coincidentally some of Shakespeare's plays seem to be responses to or parodies of Sidney. Several characters also appear to be caricatures of him.

Stratford-On-Tario

The Merchant of Venice at the world-renowned Stratford Festival Theater was a wonderful "road trip" that evening. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The lengthy bus ride was lightened by two presentations: **Tom Regnier** on the law in *The Merchant of Venice*, a revised version of his 2012 talk in Pasadena. Tom stressed the difference in the play between law and equity. **Earl Showerman** also gave a revised version of a previous talk proposing that Shylock was based on Gaspar Ribiero, a real-life Venetian. Shaksper of Stratford certainly never met him, while Edward de Vere almost certainly did.

° **Wember** writes: "Director Claus Bredenbrock writes that the film won an "Award of Excellence" in the US. http://www.theindiefest.com."

Thanks to **Don Rubin**, before the show we were able to meet with **Antoni Cimolino**, the Festival's Artistic Director. Intelligent and articulate (we are still working on getting him more interested in the authorship question) he enthusiastically explained his conception of the play.

The production itself was interestingly set in Mussolini's Italy ca. 1938. Just off stage Hitler rants and screams, while the street urchins and Fascist police Jew-bait Shylock wherever he goes. Even Portia makes racist comments. Demure Jessica, after stealing her father's jewels and running off with a gentile, reappears as his floozy in a short dress and blonde Carol Lombard wig. Shylock's vengefulness is fully motivated and powerfully portrayed.*

Antoni Cimolino discusses *The Merchant of Venice*

Saturday, October 19
Annual Meeting of the Shakespeare Oxford Society

The main business concerned the overwhelming support by the membership for the unification of the SOS and SF. The final vote, including mail-in ballots and ballots cast at the meeting, was 138 for, 2 against, and 2 abstentions.

The Society also heartily thanked and congratulated retiring treasurer Virginia Hyde for her outstanding service over the past decade.

Scott Wentworth as Shylock Stratford, Ontario 2013

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan

Film-maker Cheryl Eagan-Donovan discussed homosexuality and bisexuality in the Elizabethan theater. Several playwrights used pseudonyms to hide their sexual identity. Egan-Donovan argued that Oxford's bisexuality, together with his involvement in the theater, were motivating factors in his adopting a pseudonym.

Hank Whittemore

Whittemore described Oxford's involvement with three separate theater companies as he matured as a playwright. He first wrote for the Court with the Lord Chamberlain's men 1572 to 1583. Several of these plays were later revised by during his "Shakespeare" years. He subsequently developed the history play, partly as propaganda, with the Queen's Men 1583-1594. Finally, after 1594, he

* All true, but The Duke of Aragon (silver casket) stole the show.—Ed.

was again associated with the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

Oxford's development as a poet-playwright also paralleled his involvement in the politics of the day, perhaps explaining why the name "William Shakespeare" appears as author and actor in several published versions of the plays.

Don Rubin and Keir Cutler

A proposed debate with Stratfordians had to be cancelled as none were willing to participate. Prof. Don Rubin and actor Keir Cutler thus took the opportunity to perform some of the excuses received. Hearty laughter was heard around the room for several minutes.

Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky

Stritmatter and Kositsky presented a dramatized, humorous account of their attempts to submit a paper on *The Tempest* to an academic Shakespeare Conference. Initially accepted, their presentation was later rejected amid a flurry of funnily transparent excuses. The real but unstated reason was that their redating of the play to 1603 (now available as *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare's* The Tempest, 2013) shows that it was written before Oxford died, overcoming a major objection to his authorship.

Mark Anderson

Keynote speaker Mark Anderson discussed three "geniuses": Shakespeare, Newton, and Einstein. Each had an awkward obsession long-ignored by their admirers. Newton was obsessed with alchemy and Einstein with TOE, the Theory of Everything.

In Shakespeare, the obsession is with anonymity and authorship. Anderson illustrated this with many examples, including the astounding number of letters in the plays, characters who lose the ability to properly communicate, and characters using multiple disguises.

Recently there have been positive reassessments Einstein's and Newton's obsessions. It is time to do the same for Shakespeare.

Shelly Maycock

Maycock compared "popularity" in Elizabethan times and today. A reassessment helps to put the Essex Rebellion into its proper literary context, Shakespeare's *Richard II* and John Heyward's *Life of Henry IV*.

Maycock also discussed the nature of censorship and the relationship between Oxford and Essex.

Keir Cutler

Actor-scholar Keir Cutler's presentation was a conference highlight, and is now available on YouTube. He noted that "conspiracy theories" some times turn out to be true. Then they leave the domain of the kooks and become "historical fact."

This is illustrated by the case of a revered national figure whose writings and humanity are universally admired and whose home is a big tourist attraction for his many admirers. Keir means of course Thomas Jefferson, whose reputation was questioned for years by amateur historians claiming that he had fathered children with a 14-year-old black slave, Sally Heminges and that the truth was being covered up. Academic historians rejected this with contempt as the work of "conspiracy theorists" who secretly hated the great man and his legacy. Then along came DNA and suddenly Jefferson's conduct and the cover-up were established facts.

Cutler believes that we already have the "DNA" for the Authorship Question in such data as Shakespeare's medical and legal knowledge, his will, and the trace elements of his education and life experience. Cutler concluded by humorously dissecting *SBD*'s slipshod scholarship, to the immense delight of conference attendees.

Sky Gilbert

Prof. Sky Gilbert of Canada's Guelph University examined the Euphuistic works of John Lyly and their influence on Shakespeare. At the time there was a philosophical "feud" between the classical humanism of Shakespeare and Lyly and the newer forms of stylistic usage in the writings of Harvey and others. Gilbert pointed out that it is the delicate balance between content and expression that makes Shakespeare unique.

Last Will. & Testament

The conference was treated to the Canadian premiere of *Last Will. & Testament*. This extraordinary documentary about the Authorship Question has already won several international awards. Beautifully filmed, well edited and with fascinating interviews, *Last Will* was made in cooperation with Roland Emmerich and includes scenes from *Anonymous*.

A discussion with filmmakers Lisa and Laura Wilson followed. *Last Will* is available from PBS. An edited version has been broadcast on PBS stations nationwide.

Sunday, October 20

Annual Meeting of the Shakespeare Fellowship

The Annual Meeting of the Shakespeare Fellowship included the announcement that the membership had voted 74 to 4 in favor of unification.

Ramon Jiménez

Jimenez argued that the author of *King Lear* also wrote the anonymous and earlier *True Chronicle of King Leir*, registered and performed 1594, printed 1605. The teen-aged de Vere's first version of the Lear story was a simple and uncomplicated romance in which no violence occurred. It ended happily, with Leir and Cordella reconciled and in control of their kingdom.

Ramon Jiménez speaks on *Lear*

Picture: Hanno Wember

Later the mature dramatist rewrote the entire play, changing its genre, its message,and its outcome, freely reusing his original words, ideas, dramatic devices and characters. He retained the

Michael Morse on Fisher's Folly

Picture: Hanno Wember

main story, but added several characters and a subplot, transforming the play into a powerful and violent tragedy that reflected his own bitterness and disillusionment.

Michael Morse

Morse had time to deliver only the first of two related presentations. He spoke about Oxford's purchase of Fisher's Folly in 1580, where he lived until 1588.

This location has profound import when considering the connection between Oxford and the Shakespeare plays. It was set in the main theater district and became a place where literary people often gathered. It was also close to Bedlam (the psychiatric "hospital") which might illuminate our understanding of Shakespeare's portrayals of insanity amd/or its counterfeit, e.g., in *Lear* and *Hamlet*.

Earl Showerman

Earl Showerman continued his series of talks exploring Shakespeare's use of traditional Greek drama by discussing the influence of Aristophanes' *The Birds* (and other works) on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Showerman noted the difficulty of appreciating the influence of untranslated Greek literature on Shakespeare if you accept the biography of the traditional author. There is no problem understanding how Edward de Vere would have had access to these sources.

Closing Banquet

Aside from the wonderful food, the Banquet was memorable for three things. First, the presentation of the Oxfordian of the Year Award to Roger Stritmatter. for his scholarly contributions and, most recently his new study of *The Tempest*, written with Lynne Kositsky.

Second was an address by John Shahan, describing the success of *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* and announcing the appointment of Alec Waugh to the Presidency of the SAC (John is CEO).

The third memorable event was John Hamill, SOS President, and Tom Regnier, SF President, signing the documents required to bring the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship into being.

When the full history of the SAQ comes to be written the Unification Conference of 2013 will have an honored place.

Roger Stritmatter accepts award.

Picture: Hanno Wember

DR. Y. ASDUST EXPLAINS SHAKESPEARE

Michael Egan

A Birthday Gift for the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship?

On New Year's Day 2014 the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will begin its first calendar year of operation. A birthday present from you would be most welcome! Your dues would be great, and a Founding Donation to help the 2014 work of the Fellowship would be especially welcome. Thank you and Happy Birthday SOF, and congratulations to the proud parents, SOS and SF! New friends and credit-card users can also join online at www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.

We have new membership options. Please check one:

☐ $65 for **Regular Membership**, U.S. & Canada (includes voting rights, quarterly newsletter, printed copies of annual *The Oxfordian* journal and *Brief Chronicles* journal)

☐ $80 for **Regular International Membership** (voting rights, quarterly newsletter, printed copies of annual *The Oxfordian* journal and *Brief Chronicles* journal)

☐ $85 for **Family Membership**, U.S. & Canada (voting rights for two people at same address, newsletter, and both journals);

☐ $100 for **Family International Membership** (same as above)

☐ $50 for **Basic Membership**, U.S. & Canada (voting rights, printed copy newsletter)

☐ $65 for **Basic International Membership** (voting rights, printed copy newsletter).

☐ $30 for **E-member** (electronic copy of newsletter only)

☐ **Student membership**: $30 for U.S. & Canada and $45 for International (voting rights and printed copy newsletter).

We ask you please to make a donation in addition to your dues. Your generosity covers the major portion of the costs to operate the Fellowship and publish our materials. In the past many of our members have done this and it has sustained our organizations. We need donations even more in 2014 as we hope to begin a number of new projects including a research grant program, and can only do so with the generous help of our members and friends. ☐ **Donation $**_____

☐**Total Payment $**_____ [ ] Check enclosed [ ] Visa [ ] MasterCard [ ] Amex

Card Number_____Exp. Date _____

Signature (if using credit card) _____

Name(s) _____

Address_____

_____Telephone_____

E-mail _____

Please return to **Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale MA 02466**