



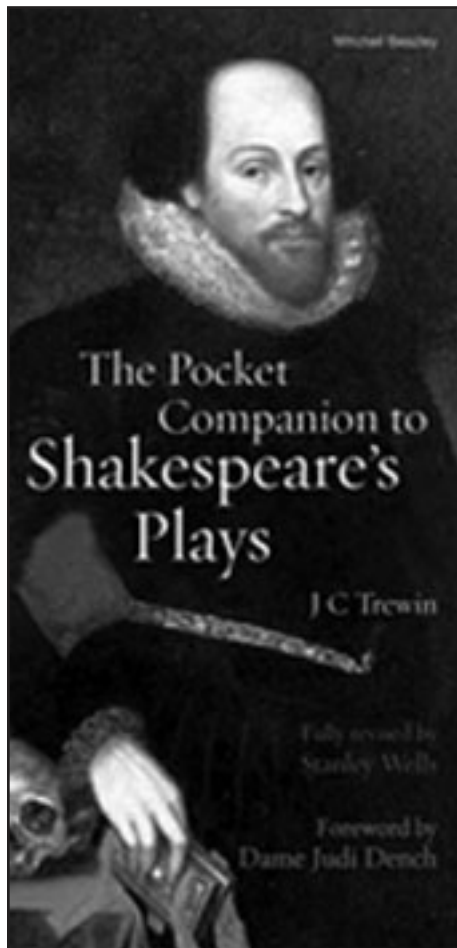
# Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship"

## 11th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference Convenes

By Bonner Miller Cutting and Earl Showerman

Concordia University hosted its 11th annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference from April 12 to 15th, an occasion marked by many seminal papers, the launch of the first graduate-level programs in authorship studies, and the signing of the "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt about the Identity of William Shakespeare." While this report will attempt to summarize the conference events and presentations, readers should be delighted to learn that Concordia is preparing to publish the proceedings of the 10th and 11th conferences later this year in a new journal, *Verité*.



A sign of the times? The Earl of Oxford (in the Ashbourne portrait) on the cover of *The Pocket Companion to Shakespeare's Plays*, revised by Stanley Wells (see Wells, p. 3)

## Shakespeare—Who held the Pen?

### Insights Meets Research

By Alan Stott

The man of letters is, in truth, ever writing his own biography. — Anthony Trollope (1815–82).

The marvel of Shakespeare's genius is that in his secular mirror the divine light also shines. — John Middleton Murry.

Every theatregoer and every reader can perceive the authentic voice, can sense the spirit, in and behind the work of the world's leading dramatic poet, known as "William Shakespeare." The First Folio (1623) of his collected plays, however, was only published years after his death. Of the actor, one William Shakespere (1564–1616) — the name never spelt as in the First Folio — very little is known. Apparently neither manuscript nor letter is extant. The many enigmas surrounding the whole phenomenon comprise "the authorship question." The identity of the Bard, according to Emerson (1803–1882), is "the first of all literary problems." John Michell<sup>1</sup> surveys the candidates with a commendable fairness, outlining the history of the search for the man who held the pen. The American author Mark Twain<sup>2</sup> – Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910) – observed: "Shakespeare had no prominence while he lived, and none until he had been dead two or three generations. The Plays enjoyed high fame from the beginning."

S.T. Coleridge (1772–1824), poet and seminal thinker, was almost the discoverer of the subconscious mind. His profound influence on philosophy, psychology, theology and literary criticism still continues. Coleridge assumed the conventional authorship of Shakespeare's plays, while rejecting the facts of his life and character:<sup>3</sup>

Ask your own hearts, – ask your own common sense – to conceive the possibility of this man... being the anomalous,

(Continued on p. 8)

(Continued on p. 24)

## Letters:

May 2, 2007

To the Editor:

Kathryn Sharpe's letter to the Editor in *Shakespeare Matters* 6:2, Winter 2007 suggests that John M. Rollett's solution to the Sonnet dedication puzzle: THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER THE FORTH is unfinished. I agree that it is unfinished because it does not include the ending initials T.T. as she points out. But I think there is an alternative solution that I find more convincing. It depends upon how one applies Rollett's 6-2-4 scheme suggested by the layout of the three inverted pyramids of the text. One may count periods and hyphens as signals to stop or one may count only periods. Rollett and Sharpe count both hyphens and periods. I believe the creator of the cypher intended us to count only periods. Sharpe also continues to count to the very end including the initials T.T. Following this scheme she gets: THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER THE FORTH T. The fourth letter "t" in the dedication is in the word BEGETTER. Accordingly she gets: THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER THE BEGETTER. While this may be a possible solution, it appears to me redundant. If the sonnets are all by E. Vere, to repeat that he is the begetter is redundant.

An alternative is to count only periods as stops and like Sharpe to continue counting through the initials. This method gives: ALL THESE SONNETS BY EVER-LIVING WELL-WISHING T. Assuming that the cypher was created by Oxford himself, as Sharpe also assumes, the message is that Oxford while still living is foreseeing his death and well-wishing something indicated by the capital letter T. I suggest that the capital letter T stands for TIME. This gives the solution: ALL THESE SONNETS BY EVER-LIVING, WELL-WISHING TIME. In other words, Oxford, while still alive, foreseeing his death, wishes that in time the secret of his authorship and of his relationship to Mr. W.H. will be discovered by solving the

cypher and by interpreting the sonnets in the proper context of time.

That the capital letter T stands for TIME is not at all unlikely. As Hank Whittemore points out, a central theme of the entire sonnet sequence is Love vs. Time. The word "Time", usually capitalized, appears 78 times in the sonnets. Whittemore writes, "the sonnets tell the story of LOVE struggling against the tyranny of TIME." p. xxviii of *The Monument*. As a brief sampling we find "the bloody tyrant Time" (#16 and #115), "devouring Time" (#19), "Times injurious hand" (#63), "Times fell hand" (#64), "Time's fickle glass" (#126), "Time that gave doth now his gift confound" (#60). There are many other instances as well.

To return to the solution it means that Oxford, while still living, wishes that in time the secret of his authorship and of his relationship to Mr. W.H. will be discovered by solving the cypher and by interpreting the sonnets in the proper context of time.

The crucial importance of time is knowing when the sonnets were written and also when the dedication was written. Whittemore makes a case for dating all of the sonnets except the first 26 after

the Essex Rebellion and imprisonment of Southampton in February of 1601. I believe the dedication with its overt as well as hidden meaning was conceived by Oxford in late 1601. Southampton is addressed as Mr. W.H. because under arrest in the Tower he has been stripped of his title and is known legally as Mr. Wriothesley, Henry. Another clue to timing is the surface meaning of the words WISHETH THE WELL-WISHING ADVENTURER IN SETTING FORTH. In 1601 Southampton invested as an "adventurer" in the voyage and proposed colonization of America led by Bartholomew Gosnold. Gosnold sailed in the ship *Concord* from Falmouth, England, for America on March 26, 1602. In a recent book by Professor Cyclone Covey of Wake Forest University, Southampton's involvement in this voyage is explained at length. Covey writes that the Gosnold voyage was "initiated and financed by Raleigh enemy Southampton from the Tower. Fellow tower inmate ex-Sheriff Thomas Smythe could have put the Earl in touch via Hakluyt with able young pirate Bartholomew Gosnold or vice versa, but Southampton already knew his Garland

(Continued on p. 32)

### Shakespeare Matters

Published quarterly by the  
The Shakespeare Fellowship  
Please address correspondence to:

Editorial Offices  
P.O. Box 65335  
Baltimore, MD 21209

Editor:  
Roger Stritmatter, PhD

Contributing Editors:  
Mark Anderson, K.C. Ligon, Lynne Kositsky, Howard Schumann, Dr. Charles Berney, Charles Boyle, Dr. Felicia Londre, Alex McNeil, Dr. Anne Pluto, Elisabeth Sears, William Boyle, Richard Whalen, Hank Whittemore, Dr. Daniel L. Wright

Phone (Baltimore, MD): (410) 764-9202  
email: newsletter@ShakespeareFellowship.org  
All contents copyright ©2007  
The Shakespeare Fellowship

Shakespeare Matters welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Fellowship as a literary and educational organization.

Subscriptions to *Shakespeare Matters* are \$40 per year (\$20 for online issues only). Family or institution subscriptions are \$45 per year. Patrons of the Fellowship are \$75 and up. Please send subscription requests to:

**The Shakespeare Fellowship**  
**PO Box 421**  
**Hudson, MA 01749**

The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship is to promote public awareness and acceptance of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), and further to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication into all aspects of Shakespeare studies, and also into the history and culture of the Elizabethan era.

The Society was founded and incorporated in 2001 in the State of Massachusetts and is chartered under the membership corporation laws of that state. It is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit (Fed ID 04-3578550).

Dues, grants and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*From the Editors*

## Fencing with Dr. Wells... and Clues From My Mailbox

For the record, Professor Stanley Wells, Chairman of the Stratford Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Fund and senior editor of the Oxford University Press edition of the collected works of the bard, is a gentleman. Of course, it can be difficult to maintain a sense of perspective when whiplashed by the rhetoric of Wells' April 2007 *Washington Post* debate article, which begins by contemptuously dismissing the authorship question as "nonsense" — and goes downhill from there. In response, Richard Waugaman, a Washington, DC, psychoanalyst of some reputation, cautioned Wells in an email:

I would respectfully suggest that this article is below your usual standards. I have the impression that you have not acquainted yourself with recent authorship scholarship. This is not unusual — I gather that most Shakespeare scholars ignore it altogether, trusting their fellow specialists who assure everyone, as you do in this article, that there's no serious question about it.... starting with "the nonsense" in your first sentence, you systematically create, then attack, one straw man after another. You invoke well worn methods of undermining the credibility of those who disagree with you about authorship. You deny that there are legitimate questions about it, then attribute illegitimate motives to those who raise questions about it.... I would find your argument more credible if you engaged more seriously with recent authorship scholarship....

A familiar story, isn't it?

The story of how I came to debate



Professor Stanley Wells, Chairman of the Stratford Birthplace Trust Fund.

Wells may be less familiar and seems to say something about the increasing profile of the Oxford case in the media which today, ironically, often seems better informed about the issue than academicians like Dr. Wells, who are suddenly expected to discuss a subject in public about which they know next to nothing. Originally, as part of the 2007 Washington, DC, Shakespeare Festival, the *Washington Post Outlook* had planned to run a story on the authorship question written from a nontraditional perspective. I think the concept was that it would be good to counterbalance the monopolistic practices of the reigning paradigm with a rational counterpoint actually written by someone who has (God forbid) another perspective. After all, in today's educational ivory tower, the dialogue on authorship typically proceeds like this:

**Independent student:** Professor, I heard that there is an authorship question. Some people — I heard that Freud was one of them — even think the plays were written by the Earl of Oxford.

**Professor:** There will be no talk of that sort in my classroom. Your grade for

today's discussion is an "F." Now, does anyone have anything else they want to talk about?

**Straight A-Student:** Professor, why does Hamlet delay?

After discussing the prospect with several leading Oxfordians, *Outlook* offered your editor the opportunity to write the article. It turned out, however, that a senior *Outlook* editor was good buddies with a leading American scholar of the Stratfordian persuasion, and when she saw what I had written, it suddenly became necessary to offer equal time to the reigning dogma. Who ever said the virtue of rational dialogue is dead?

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to meet Wells shortly after the *Outlook* debate, at the annual meetings of the Shakespeare Association of America. I was swiftly able to write off his verbal slings and arrows as definitely being the consequence of the dynamic identified by Waugaman, whereby orthodox scholars operate in a kind of collectively imposed intellectual bubble, and consequently don't know any better than to denounce their interlocutors as unwashed followers of the latest intellectual craze (see page six, for Stephanie Hughes' detailed confutation of Wells' *Outlook* argument). In our brief personal exchange I could not detect any particular hostility on the part of Dr. Wells towards anti-Stratfordians. Perhaps it is a fond delusion, but your editor even likes to suppose that Wells may have been somewhat surprised by the level of intellectual sophistication contained in his challenger's essay.

Certainly, judging by the tepid nature of the visible orthodox counterattack, there

*(Continued on p. 23)*

# From a Never Writer to an Ever Reader: News...

## A New England "Oxfordian News" Dinner

On Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, an impromptu gathering of assorted Oxfordians took place in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the Legal Sea Foods Restaurant. The event was organized by Lori DiLiddo, a Cambridge resident and devoted Oxfordian of long standing, and was attended by a notable contingent of New England area Oxfordians. While the event was not sponsored by either the Shakespeare Fellowship or the Shakespeare Oxford Society, a spirit of good feeling prevailed between members of both organizations in attendance. Richard Whalen and Chuck Berney, past presidents of the S.O.S. and the S.F., sat side by side at the dinner table. Whalen, whose Cape Cod group meets monthly, reported on his plans to publish an Oxfordian set of the plays of "Shakespeare." Berney plans to speak on *The Winter's Tale* at this summer's Utrecht Authorship conference.

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan of Contemporary Films reported on her project of making a documentary television program based on Mark Anderson's book, *Shakespeare by another Name*. Another notable at the event was Sarah Smith, author of *Chasing Shakespeare*, a novel focused on the authorship issue, which has recently been adapted as a play in collaboration with Alex Chisholm. Sarah is in contact with Tim Holcomb and Steve Eldridge regarding a possible presentation of the play in the Northampton area by the Hampshire Shakespeare Company.



New England Oxfordians gathered for a spring evening under the leadership of Lori DiLiddo. From left to right: Joanna Wexler, Fellowship President nominee Alex McNeil, and Jill McNeil. Many Oxfordians do not know that McNeil, a mild-mannered solicitor and Court administrator by day (and ace proofreader), is secretly a rock and roll musician who enjoys covering *Jefferson Airplane*, among others.

Lisa and Laura Wilson reported that the eminent film writer and director Roland Emmerich (*The Day After Tomorrow*) is considering becoming a signatory to the "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt about the Identity of William Shakespeare" (see details at [www.Doubtaboutwill.org](http://www.Doubtaboutwill.org)), a recently launched

effort to mobilize opinion on the authorship question. Sources say he is looking for the appropriate moment to affix his signature to the Declaration.

Bill Boyle spoke of his plans to establish a New England Oxfordian Library as a resource for inquiry into the authorship question. The plan is a twofold effort: first,

to make available several hundred books belonging to himself and Betty Sears; second, a web site effort, providing links to pages where public domain books may be accessed online in digital form for reading and research purposes.

Finally, Alex McNeil, nominee to be the next president of the Shakespeare Fellowship, spoke of the efforts of the joint committee of the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society for unification of the two organizations, saying "It is going to happen." We all wish this committee every success in their efforts. And, of course, the plans for a joint

conference of the two organizations were announced, to be held at Carmel, California, on October 4-7 of this year. Please visit the web site, [www.shakespearefellowship.org](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org), for further details.

The participants in the dinner were pleased with the response, and Lori is planning to organize a similar event in 2008. To this end she is assembling a regional directory of interested persons. Those wishing to receive notice of these plans, you should contact Lori at [Elledeo@aol.com](mailto:Elledeo@aol.com).

### McNeil in *Globe*

A May 16 *Boston Globe* interview with Alex McNeil by Don Aucoin features the an extended discussion of the authorship question, the case for Oxford, and McNeil's critique of the anti-intellectualism of official Stratfordianism. Headlined "Total Television' scribe Alex McNeil is now consumed with proving that Shakespeare wasn't the real Bard," the article details McNeil's avocation as a world-recognized expert on the history of television, author of the Penguin guide, *Total Television*, a 1,251-page compendium of trivia about sitcoms, soap operas, westerns, variety shows, prime-time dramas, and talk shows. "Oxfordians are getting kind of tired of being marginalized," the article quotes McNeil as saying. "The standard reaction in academic circles is 'These people are nuts. Case closed.' . . . We're tired of being pushed around."

### De Vere at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival

Like we said, policing a paradigm shift can be an exhausting job. Just as the Shakespearean establishment was about to heave a big sigh of relief that only 8 percent of its card-carrying members were secret heretics, a bad case of the dreaded disease, Deveritis, has been detected at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. *Denver Post* critic Bob Bows, in a review of *All's Well that Ends Well*, identifies the author as one "Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, whose entire life is detailed in the canon."

"Once de Vere's life is illuminated," continues Bows, "we see that this play is filled with biographical details, beginning with Bertram's petulant refusal to consummate his forced marriage to Helena, continuing with 'step-sister' Helena's budding confusion over her relationship with Bertram, moving forward with Bertram's profligate behavior throughout, climaxing in the famous 'bed trick,' and culminating with the resurrection of Helena."

### De Vere Essay Wins California State History Day Award

Allegra Krasznekewicz, a junior at Santa Catalina High School in Monterey, California, has won the spring 2007 Monterey County History Day competition for an essay on the authorship question, "William Shakespeare and the Authorship Controversy: A Study in Literary Triumph and Historical Tragedy." Krasznekewicz went on to win the California State History Day Competition for her the



Allegra Krasznekewicz, a junior at Santa Catalina High School, won the 2006-2007 California State History Day Competition for her essay, "William Shakespeare and the Authorship Controversy: A Study in Literary Triumph and Historical Tragedy."

paper (forthcoming in the fall 2007 issue of *Shakespeare Matters*). She has also received top awards in the Monterey County Poetry Competition the past two years, and placed second in the nation on the National French Exam. Although Krasznekewicz started reading and performing Shakespeare in junior high school, it was during the summer of her freshman year when she spent a month in London and Oxford that her interest in Shakespeare and the authorship controversy began to develop. Upon her return home and under the tutelage of Ms. Forbes Keaton, she continued her research into the subject and decided to incorporate it into a paper for the History Day Competition. Allegra plans to study history and literature in college, and she would like to pursue a career as a writer and professor.

### Mark Rylance, Author and Star of New Authorship Play

Mark Rylance, *Globe* artistic director from 1996-2006 and current chairman of London's Shakespeare Authorship Trust Fund, has weighed into the authorship question with a creative manifesto that some English critics expect "could turn out to be one of the theatrical events of the year." The show stars Rylance as a schoolteacher who throws away a promising academic career by daring to question who wrote Shakespeare's plays, but continues to explore his obsession via a subversive internet show. Rylance is currently regarded as one of England's most talented stage actors.

# Four Hundred Years of Stonewalling

A reply to Prof. Stanley Wells in *The Washington Post*, Sunday, March 18, 2007

By Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

According to prof. Stanley Wells, “the nonsense,” as he terms the authorship question, started “around 1785.” Right off good Master Wells shows his ignorance of the argument he claims to refute, a dangerous ploy. It’s probably better to have some grasp of the enemy’s argument before blasting away with pejoratives. Wells uses that date because it’s the only one he’s got, not because it says anything about when the question of Shakespeare’s authorship first arose. It may or may not be the first time the question arose in an extant manuscript or in print, but it could hardly have been the first time it ever arose.

As Wells certainly must know, the history of the period shows that authorship controversy was rife in Shakespeare’s time. For several years from 1589 until 1593 when the government finally managed to hang a couple of scapegoats, there was a constant and passionate hunt on for the author of the scandalous Martin MarPrelate pamphlets, an authorship question that like so many others remains unresolved to this day. In 1592-93, Nashe protested with fury in *Piers Penniless* to as yet undiscovered sources of gossip that he was the author of Robert Greene’s *Groatsworth of Witte*. Manuscripts have been found among Burghley’s papers that suggest that he was the author of various propaganda pieces, mostly anti-Catholic, published underground under cover names (Hume 153, Bright 40, 42). Who wrote the scurrilous *Leicester’s Commonwealth*?

Who wrote the Parnassus plays? Who was the ink-stained “Gentlewoman” of Harvey’s pamphlet’s? Why would Spenser take pains to hide his identity at first as

---

**As Wells certainly must know, the history of the period shows that authorship controversy was rife in Shakespeare’s time... The era reeks of attempts to publish material without suffering the consequences, which could include loss of life, liberty, or one’s writing hand. Everyone who studies the history of literature and of book publishing during this period, knows this. As Nashe’s jaundiced retort shows, most of this controversy never reached the press, or if it did, it didn’t survive.**

---

“Immerito” then drop the pen name later? Who was the “R.B.” whose initials pop up in all sorts of interesting places over the years? The arguments over how much of

Shakespeare’s early works were by him and how much by writers like Lodge, Greene, Peele, and Kyd, continues to rage. The era reeks of attempts to publish material without suffering the consequences, which could include loss of life, liberty, or one’s writing hand. Everyone who studies the history of literature and of book publishing during this period, knows this. As Nashe’s jaundiced retort shows, most of this controversy never reached the press, or if it did, it didn’t survive.

Although the origins of the authorship question can’t be traced to any particular date in time, it can easily be traced to any one of the vast accumulation of anomalies with which the Stratford biography is riddled, suggesting to anyone who thought twice about it that the true author had to be someone else. If these weren’t made public until the late nineteenth century (by the Baconians), it may be because it wasn’t until then that the world of academia began to pay any attention whatsoever to England’s greatest poet and playwright, chief architect of today’s language (Boas 2-4). In fact, the likelihood is that anyone who ever attempted to research the Stratford biography, from 1709 (Nicholas Rowe) up to today, has come away either perplexed or suspicious, whatever they may have chosen to say in public. How could they not, when the only evidence the citizens of Stratford had to offer were the sort of yarns pub regulars tend to spin if pressed for information by

(Continued on p. 13)

# The Mysterious Charlton Ogburn

## Remembering the Man Behind the Myth-Buster

By Jack Glawson

In 1984, Charlton Ogburn completed *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and The Reality*, an 892-page examination of the Shakespeare authorship issue, in which he rejected the man from Stratford-Upon-Avon (the myth) as the author of Shakespeare's works and championed Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (the reality). It was the culmination of more than four decades of study and would, some say, single-handedly revive the debate about who was the author of Shakespeare's works. But in considering Ogburn's book other questions emerge, namely: Who was Charlton Ogburn? Who would endorse what academia has termed heresy? How did it happen? And what does it matter?

In his foreword to *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* David McCullough, who would later be awarded two Pulitzer Prizes, tells of an evening in the late 1960s when he and Ogburn were having dinner at a Washington, DC, restaurant and discussing a book Ogburn would write and McCullough would edit. Then Ogburn got started on the subject of Shakespeare. McCullough was familiar with a few of Ogburn's books, the novel *Gold of the River Sea*, a Book-of-the-Month Club selection; and *The Winter Beach*, which won the John Burroughs Medal for distinguished writing on natural history. He knew Ogburn as "a writer of intelligence and integrity and wonderful feeling for the natural world," but he knew nothing of his interest in Shakespeare.

"He was absolutely spellbinding,"

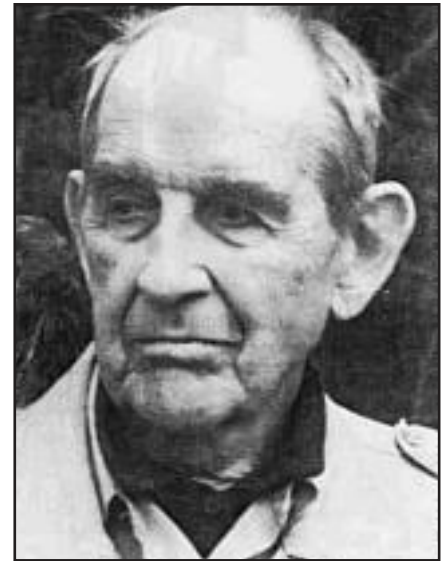
McCullough sings. "Looking back on that evening years ago I feel as if I had been witness to the beginnings of a literary landmark... Anyone who considers the Shakespeare controversy silly or a lot of old stuff is in for a particular surprise."

Ogburn's Shakespeare treatise would be his most ambitious and scholarly work, and would convert many, including three U.S. Supreme Court justices. But it would also draw fire from, or be ignored by, a great many more. No surprise. These were responses for which he was prepared. He had dealt with rejection before.

In 1954 Ogburn, then a State Department adviser for Far Eastern Affairs, chief of a research division, and graduate of the National War College, wrote his boss, Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson:

Our present course with respect to China and Indochina... is taking us ever closer to a war that would be morally unjustified, lack the support and confidence of our most important allies... could be immensely costly in American lives and disastrous with respect to our national interests... If we once become militarily engaged in Vietnam, we cannot expect to be able to limit the extent of our involvement. If we send forces of any kind we should have committed our prestige to the defeat of the Vietminh [North Vietnamese].

Seventeen years later, on July 12, 1971, *The Washington Post* would say of Ogburn's memorandum: "it forecast the failure of U.S. policy in Vietnam with



"Absolutely spellbinding": For decades, Charlton Ogburn (1911-1998), and his parents before him, carried the torch for de Vere's authorship of the Shakespeare canon. It was Ogburn's 1984 book, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, together with the diligent work of Ruth Loyd Miller (d. 2005), that laid the foundations of today's Oxfordian movement. But Ogburn's advocacy of the case for de Vere's authorship was but on thread in a life rich with accomplishments one can only respect and honor.

remarkable accuracy." *The Post* went on to say that Ogburn considered his prescience as nothing extraordinary. "I had the right idea about Vietnam," he said, "because my nose was rubbed in it." And indeed it was.

Beginning with Burma in World War II, Ogburn's nose was rubbed raw by the chaos and anxiety of war and politics in Southeast Asia. On Oct. 29, 1943, as a U.S. Army lieutenant, Ogburn arrived in Bombay, India, with 3,000 other soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) code named Galahad. They then spent more than three months in intensive jungle warfare training, during which time they marched as much as 40 miles in a day carrying heavy weapons. Afterwards they fought the Japanese deep behind enemy lines to open a road from India to China so

(Continued on p. 17)

*(Conference, cont. from p. 1)*

After a greeting by Concordia University Provost Dr. Mark Wahlers, the conference commenced with Prof. Daniel Wright's extended, witty introduction of the first speaker, Michael Cecil, the Marquess of Exeter and 18th Baron Burghley, whose topic was: "And these few precepts in thy memory / Look thou character': Revisiting the First Baron Burghley's Precepts for the Well Ordering and Carriage of a Man's Life." Cecil's personal copy of Burghley's maxims was printed in 1637, though it apparently was written around 1582 for Robert Cecil and circulated in manuscript form as early as 1616.

Cecil noted that his ancestor, the elder brother, Thomas Cecil, probably suffered very much like Edward de Vere for his "wild and wanton ways," behavior that would have been quite offensive to Sir William. Besides Lord Burghley's 10 precepts, Michael's volume includes precepts of the Earl of Bedford plus additional unattributed maxims including the following text: "Go as thou would be met, sit as thou would be found, Wear thy apparel in a careless, yet decent way: for affectedness in anything is commendable in nothing; and endeavour to be so far from vainglory, that thou strive in everything rather to be in substance without show, than in show without substance." Cecil argued that this is very similar to Polonius' "to thine own self be true" speech in *Hamlet*. Noting William's proclivity to the ancient patriarchal tradition of regular large parties dining together in the Great Hall, Cecil suggested that family members no doubt rolled their eyes and thought "here we go again" when these principles were elaborated over dinner; "Who but an associate or intimate of the Cecil family would have heard or seen these words prior to their initial public printing in 1616?"

Ian Haste's presentation, "Vera: The Name within the Ring in *The Merchant of Venice*," was fascinating for the unique usage of the word "ring" in the fifth act of the play, and its significance relative to Edward de Vere's punning his own name in both his mottos (*vero nihil verius*) and his poetry, including the Echo Verses. Noting that the modern Italian word *vera* translates into English as the adjective *true*, Haste identified multiple other possible English

meanings for *vera*, mostly related to objects that are circular and flat, including a wedding ring in the Italian dialect that was spoken around Venice during the time de Vere was in residence there.

The Italian plural for *vera* is *vere*, and

---

Ian Haste's presentation, "Vera: The Name within the Ring in *The Merchant of Venice*," was fascinating for the unique usage of the word "ring" in the fifth act of the play, and its significance relative to Edward de Vere's punning his own name in both his motto (*vero nihil verius*) and his poetry, including the Echo Verses. Noting that the modern Italian word *vera* translates into English as the adjective *true*, Haste identified multiple other possible English meanings for *vera*, mostly related to objects that are circular and flat, including a wedding ring in the Italian dialect that was spoken around Venice during the time de Vere was in residence there.

The Italian plural for *vera* is *vere*...

---

Haste points how Shakespeare employs two wedding rings in final scenes of the story, unlike its untranslated source, *Il Pecorone* by Giovanni Fiorentino, which had but one. In Act 5 of *Merchant* the word "ring" appears as the last word in 9 out of 10 lines in a dialogue between Bassanio and Portia, and there are numerous other references to rings throughout the

act where the word is used 24 times, the first 20 being capitalized in the First Folio edition, and the play ends with the word "ring." Haste concluded his presentation with the assertion that Edward de Vere was not only obsessed with his name, but that he wrote the "ring" speeches in *Merchant* as connotations to his own name.

Claire Van Kampen, former Director of Music at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, presented her paper, "Sir Francis Bacon and the 'Shakespeare Group'" via DVD. Van Kampen argued that the author was far more likely to have been a highly educated and connected aristocrat than the man from Stratford, with Francis Bacon the most promising candidate as the leader of a group of writers.

In his talk "Exit Shakspeare, Enter Oxford," William Jansen discussed the matter of the performance venue of the plays using meticulous analysis of the number of lines that characters took to enter and exit. The greater the numbers of lines needed for the actor to maneuver on and off the stage may indicate that the play was intended for the public venue, as the player needed to have more time to position himself on the stage. A private setting requires a shorter distance to the player's mark as there is less distance to traverse.

Jansen's research, compiled with the collaboration of Dr. Eric Altschuler, verified the distinct correlation of greater numbers of entry and exit lines with the plays posited to have been for public performance. Fewer entry and exit lines appear in the plays primarily (or entirely) intended for private audiences. This seemingly innocuous data supports the proposition that many of the plays were private entertainments, which in turn has implications for the authorship debate. "Shakespeare" was writing for a privileged, coterie audience, and not for the masses. The next step to consider is the absence of mention of the man from Stratford in the court records (or the records of any aristocratic household), a notable lacuna when put in juxtaposition with the private performance venues of the Shakespeare plays.

On Friday, the conference began with William Farina's fascinating presentation on "The Origins of Shylock's Venice:



Mermaid Tavern or the School of Hard Knocks?" Noting the disproportionate interest in and scholarship on *Merchant*, for its troubling subject matter, for the real life places and incidents taken from the Veneto, and for its descriptions English and Italian law, Farina made the point that many scholars believe Shakespeare to have had a remarkably good handle on the Italian settings. Far more likely that the author was the "renegade nobleman," Edward de Vere, who lived in Venice from 1575-76, than someone picking up tidbits of Italian culture and geography at the Mermaid Tavern. Although Edmund Chambers dates the play to around 1596, there is evidence that its roots go back 25 years. In 1579, a lost play titled *The Jew* was performed, and the plot, according to one observer, was a cautionary tale against greed and usury. As for the primary sources of *Merchant*, Farina identifies the untranslated *Il Pecorone*, as well as Anthony Munday's *Zelauto* (1580), which was dedicated to the Earl of Oxford, and suggests this was the very period when Oxford was losing his shirt financially while at the same time active as a court impresario.

Farina acknowledged the pioneering work of Oxfordian scholars such as Naomi Magri in showing Shakespeare's detailed knowledge of the Veneto region in multiple plays as well as in *Venus and Adonis*. The setting for Belmont in *Merchant* is very likely to represent the Villa Foscari, which was actually used for the Belmont scenes in the recent film version with Oxfordian Jeremy Irons playing Antonio, the merchant. Unlike Marlowe's highly prejudicial depiction of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, or Jonson's mocking the Italians in *Volpone*, Shakespeare's Shylock is portrayed more sympathetically and his Italians are far more complex and troubling. The very fact that Shakespeare knew that business between Jewish moneylenders and Christians took place in the Rialto is remarkable; nowhere in England would such a market possibly exist. The property confiscation and religious conversion judgments against Shylock in *Merchant* follow case precedents in Italy, including specific Jewish blood libel cases. Citing Manchester University Prof Brian Pullen's article "Shakespeare's Shylock: Evidence from

Venice," Farina outlined the case of Gaspar Ribiero, a Jew in Venice who was sued for usury (3,000 ducats being the principal, exactly the amount in *Merchant*) in 1567, and who suffered property confiscation and was obliged to convert to Christianity in the judgment. Pullen's article detailed many other parallels between Ribiero and Shylock, although he did not conclude that Shakespeare must have visited Venice.

Charles Beauclerk, the Earl of

---

**Leahy believes that it is time for the authorship question to be brought into an open and congenial framework of academic study. Heretofore supported by the "willed blindness" of academic authority, the Shakespeare myth has grown into a cultural phenomenon. Leahy noted in a previous interview with *Shakespeare Matters* that the traditional story presents genuine problems with biography, chronology, attribution, collaboration, and authenticity. The Shakespeare phenomenon poses many serious intellectual questions that merit objective academic study...**

---

Burford, then presented "Timon: Son of Fortune," a rhetorically rich psychological excursion through a play about the broken dream of sovereignty. "Sun, hide thy beams, Timon hath done his reign." Beauclerk writes, "Timon's largess is not based on his means, but on his presumptuous relationship to Fortune, the sole feminine presence of the play and its only deity. Right from the start the figure of Fortuna, the goddess of chance (one of the most popular tropes

for Elizabeth I) is pictured towering over the action.... He is her minion; her son." Beauclerk observed that Fortune is also represented by Athens and especially by gold, which is described both as a "visible god" and the "common whore of mankind." Timon's failed relationship with Fortune provides the core of the play, and raging against his misfortune, Timon ultimately sinks into madness and loss of identity.

Paul Nicholson, Executive Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), then presented "The Shakespeare Authorship Question: Practical Implications for the Theatre." Admitting that this was tantamount to his "coming out of the closet" on the authorship question, Nicholson presented the results of an informal survey he recently conducted with members of the OSF company, the actors, directors and dramaturgy specialists. In general, the artistic staff agreed that an alternative attribution would not change things very much (unless Shakespeare was actually a woman, according to one respondent). Different nuances could be realized, and the education and rehearsal programs would have to change, but the productions themselves would not be significantly different. The inventory of books and "baubles" in the Tudor Guild gift shop would have to be sacrificed, but then new opportunities will arise. The logo recently adopted by OSF positions the organization perfectly for the mounting challenge to the Shakespeare attribution.

Prof. William Leahy, senior lecturer and head of English at Brunel University in England, presented the Keynote Address "Who's there? The Shakespeare Authorship Question and the Undermining of Traditional Authority." In this address, Dr. Leahy presented a commentary on the power of the orthodox establishment to implement a myth utilizing the standard weaponry of the academic arsenal: most notably the power to expound through the methodology of citation. Dr. Leahy is in a unique position to observe the academic reverberations of the authorship issue when the English department at Brunel University opens its doors to a new Master's Degree program in Shakespeare Authorship Studies this coming fall.

Leahy believes that it is time for the

*(Continued on p. 10)*

(Conference, cont. from p. 9)

authorship question to be brought into an open and congenial framework of academic study. Heretofore supported by the “willed blindness” of academic authority, the Shakespeare myth has grown into a cultural phenomenon. Leahy noted in a previous interview with *Shakespeare Matters* that the traditional story presents genuine problems with biography, chronology, attribution, collaboration, and authenticity. The Shakespeare phenomenon poses many serious intellectual questions that

---

**Stanford Prof Rima Greenhill continued to develop her insightful research on the Russian subtext in *Love’s Labor’s Lost*... Ivan the Terrible negotiated many favorable trade agreements with England in the expectation of being offered asylum in England and possible marriage to Queen Elizabeth, and later to Lady Mary Hastings. Prof. Greenhill concludes that Don Armado and Costard are based in part on the characters of Ivan, and Ivan Junior, and that Shakespeare wrote the play as an insider burlesque of Ivan’s lost suit to marry England, relying on travel accounts and secret dispatches of English ambassadors to develop his characters and scenes.**

---

merit objective academic study.

Hank Whittmore presented aspects of the “numerical elegance” of Shakespeare’s Sonnets, focusing on the “century” of 100 verses (Sonnets 27-126) and its relationship to the 100 consecutively numbered sonnets of *The Hekatompathia*, or *Passionate Century of Love* by Thomas Watson, published in 1582 and dedicated to Oxford. In particular, the structural division within *The Hekatompathia* of 80 sonnets and 20 sonnets is repeated in the Shakespeare sequence; and in both cases, the eighty-first sonnet is the climax or high point. In the Shakespeare sequence, the eighty-first of the central 100 sonnets is

Sonnet 107, regarded by many scholars as celebrating the release of Southampton from the Tower in April 1603 upon the death of Queen Elizabeth and the succession of King James. Whittmore’s conclusion was that Oxford had been intimately involved in the writing, editing and publishing *The Hekatompathia* attributed to Watson; and that in creating the Shakespeare sequence published in 1609, he deliberately drew upon his own previous work.

Friday’s program concluded with a presentation by Bill Boyle, “The Right of Succession of England: The 2nd Earl of Essex – King or Kingmaker?” His presentation included a discussion of evidence that the Earl was once considered both a possible heir to the crown after Elizabeth’s death and one who could have influenced the succession. Boyle also presented information about the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library, which was founded this year. The library will be supported by annual fees, make authorship books and educational materials available to the public, and maintain an electronic catalog online at [www.shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org](http://www.shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org). Books and other materials may be provided to subscribers by visiting the library, or via mail service. The library is currently cataloging materials related to the Shakespeare authorship question, and will make all its holdings keyword searchable. Library services will commence this fall, and the initial focus will be to build the collection and sponsor education events.

Saturday morning the program began with Dr. Paul Altrocchi’s presentation on “The Roscius Annotation: Smoking Gun or Epicurean Tidbit?” (The complete article by Altrocchi and co-author Prof. Alan Nelson is in the spring issue of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*). Recalling the fallout from the original article on the Roscius annotation in a 1590 edition of William Camden’s *Britannia* in *Shakespeare Matters* in 2003, Dr. Altrocchi started by praising the cooperation and support he received from Prof. Nelson. They were able to determine that the Huntington Library edition was annotated by Richard Hunt, who was educated at Oxford and served as Vicar of Itchington from 1621-61, where his residence was within a few miles of Stratford. On the page listing several notables of Stratford, Hunt wrote an inscription in Latin that translates “and to William Shakespear, certainly our Roscius.” Roscius was Rome’s greatest actor, and a friend of Cicero. During his lifetime, and extending to modernity, the term “Roscius” or “Roscian” would usually refer to excellence in acting; Richard Burbage and Edward Allyn were both compared to Roscius. However, so was Ben Jonson, not for his acting, but for his writing skills in another annotation dating to the same period. Altrocchi warned against the tendency of Oxfordians or Stratfordians to draw unwarranted or prejudicial conclusions from Hunt’s intriguing note in his *Britannia*.

Alan Nelson then presented his extensive database search of the British National Archives for Shakespeare-related names in the London and Stratford areas between 1582 and 1595. He surveyed thousands of names on various rolls, and used a variety of acceptable spellings including Shakespere, Shakespeare, Shakerly, Shakford, and many others. Very few Shakespeare-type names were identified from the archives. Prof. Nelson concluded his remarks with an admonishment against authorship doubters

---

who make too big a deal out of the inconsistent spellings of the Will's name in the Stratford documents.

Dr. Earl Showerman then presented a paper on "The Mythopoeisis of Resurrection – Hesiod to Shakespeare." Examining *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, Showerman showed how the author employed classical Greek nomenclature, dramaturgy, deities and symbolic geography in both plays. Both dramas tell stories of kings who suffer extreme loss and long grief, of redeeming, virtuous daughters, and of resurrected, sainted queens. Both plays end in cathartic reunions, are dominated by the divine twins, Apollo and Diana, and share a mutual root in the mythopoetic treatment of human resurrection from the earliest Greek lyric poets through the literature of the Golden Age of Athens, the poetry of Ovid, and the writings of the medieval English poets Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower.

Over a century ago, many scholars recognized that Euripides' *Alcestis* is the source for Shakespeare's resurrection of Hermione. G. Wilson Knight has referred to the statue scene of *The Winter's Tale* as the "most strikingly conceived and profoundly penetrating moment in English literature." In *Pericles*, Thaisa is resuscitated by Lord Cerimon, who invokes both Apollo and Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, and whose practice and philosophy clearly represents Hippocratic traditions. Shakespeare modeled the most revered physician depicted in all the plays on Hippocrates, the greatest Greek physician, the *heros iatros*, who was reputed to have the power to raise the dead.

Showerman noted that Shakespeare's two romances both employ narrators, and have 15-16 year gaps between disaster and redemption. Both queens are post-partum when they appear to die, and both daughters are named for their birth circumstances. In both, music and prayer are incorporated into the scenes of resurrection, and both dramas employ providential tempests, dream prophesy and sacred ceremony. Remarkably, both are also populated by characters Shakespeare named after famous Greeks of antiquity. *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles* are thus linked in highly significant ways that warrant direct comparison, one that can be traced through 2,000 years of poetic license on royal immortality. Hermetic texts may also have influenced Shakespeare's powerful and inspired vision of resuscitating the dead. The importance of these relationships between Shakespeare and the Greek canon strikes at the heart of the authorship controversy, since it has been accepted over the past 100 years that the Stratford Grammar School would not have given Will Shakespeare the ability to read untranslated Greek poetry like *Alcestis*.

Stanford Professor Rima Greenhill continued to develop her insightful research on the Russian subtext in *Love's Labour's Lost* with her paper, "Holofernes, Moth and Sir Nathaniel in the Context of Russian-English Relations 1584-98." Last year she presented her case in "From Russia with Love" which appeared in 2006 in *The Oxfordian* (9). Ivan the Terrible negotiated many favorable trade agreements with England in the expectation of being offered asylum in England and possible marriage to Queen Elizabeth, and later to Lady Mary Hastings. Greenhill concludes that Don Armado and Costard are based in part on the characters of Ivan, and Ivan Junior, and that Shakespeare wrote the play as an

insider burlesque of Ivan's lost suit to marry England, relying on travel accounts and secret dispatches of English ambassadors to develop his characters and scenes. Giles Fletcher, the ambassador to Russia in 1588, published an exposé on Russia in 1591 (*Of the Russe Commonwealth*) which would have infuriated the Russians, and which was immediately suppressed by Lord Burghley.

Holofernes, according to Greenhill, is based on the famous Russian usurper Boris Godunov, Sir Nathaniel is based on Tsar Ivan's heir Fyodor, and Moth appears to be based on Ivan's youngest

---

**Richard Whalen took a closer look at the problem of ambiguity in "The First Folio, Not Valid Evidence for Will Shakespeare, but a Maze of Ambiguity." Noting that orthodox scholars give full faith and credit to Ben Jonson's Introduction to the First Folio as *prima facie* evidence of the Stratford man's authorship, Whalen examines the Folio statements in their historical context and operative literary traditions. Since the Shakespeare establishment rests such weighty conviction on the lonely shoulders of Ben Jonson, a peak into Jonson's life and literary accomplishments is in order.**

---

son, Dmitry. "The Pageant of the Nine Worthies" is particularly significant in the roles played by the Russian-based characters, including a specific reference to Fyodor's hooked nose by Berowne. Greenhill concluded her comments by suggesting the author of *LLL* was well versed in Russian history and trade relations with England, which provided an amusing topical subplot to a 'pleasantly conceited' comedy designed for performance at the Elizabethan court.

Richard Whalen took a closer look at the problem of ambiguity in "The First Folio, Not Valid Evidence for Will Shakespeare, but a Maze of Ambiguity." Noting that orthodox scholars give full faith and credit to Ben Jonson's Introduction to the First Folio as *prima facie* evidence of the Stratford man's authorship, Whalen examines the Folio statements in their historical context and operative literary traditions. Since the Shakespeare establish-

(Continued on p. 12)

(Conference, cont. from p. 11)

ment rests such weighty conviction on the lonely shoulders of Ben Jonson, a peak into Jonson's life and literary accomplishments is in order.

In examining David Riggs' recent biography of Ben Jonson, hailed as "a scholarly achievement of the prize-winning kind," Whalen notes that Jonson is revealed as a masterful perpetrator of literary mischief. In Jonson, Riggs depicts a writer who routinely forces his readers to work their way through "a maze of seductive falsehoods." One can hardly find a work of Jonson's that does not "bristle with contradictions," and display his "mock encomium[s]" and "tantalizingly equivocal" style. Whether the responsible

---

**Establishment divas Annabel Patterson and Gail Kern Paster recognize that ambiguity permeated the literature of the time. Patterson states that the writings of Ben Jonson give exemplary evidence of the "highly sophisticated system of oblique communication, of unwritten rules whereby writers could communicate with readers or audiences ...without producing direct confrontation." Patterson notes that Jonson "was this most complex of authors," and Paster finds that Shakespeare himself "a master of ambiguity..."**

---

parties behind the First Folio were the two actors Heminge and Condell, as the Shakespeare Establishment fervently avows, or the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery whose patronage they sought, a better choice than Ben Jonson for the editorial board of the First Folio could not be found, particularly if someone had in mind something that required obfuscation.

Establishment divas Annabel Patterson and Gail Kern Paster recognize that ambiguity permeated the literature of the time. Patterson states that the writings of Ben Jonson give exemplary evidence of the "highly sophisticated system of oblique communication, of unwritten rules whereby writers could communicate with readers or audiences ...without producing direct confrontation." Patterson notes that Jonson "was this most complex of authors," and Paster finds that Shakespeare himself "a master of ambiguity." Whalen demonstrates how much ambiguity is interwoven into every nook and cranny of the Introduction to the

First Folio, even to the multiple meanings of the word "gentle." It would appear that Jonson's Introduction is more a matter of one master of political intrigue, cloaked by ambiguity, tipping his hat to another.

Continuing with the subject of the First Folio, Bonner Miller Cutting narrated the story of the life and circumstances of Lady Anne Clifford in her paper, "The Case of the Missing First Folio." Lady Anne Clifford, one of the wealthiest and best-educated noblewomen of the era, was the second wife of the Earl of Montgomery. As her husband and his brother, the Earl of Pembroke, were the patrons of the First Folio (and thereby patrons of Shakespeare) it makes sense that Lady Anne was historically well positioned to know all about Shakespeare. Even more significantly, in the mid-1640s she commissioned a massive painting celebrating her family heritage. The painting, known as the "Appleby Triptych" and also sometimes called "Lady Anne Clifford's Great Picture," showcased her stellar erudition with approximately fifty books displayed throughout its three panels. They are boldly labeled to be readily identifiable, and in a remarkable bit of overkill, the books and authors are listed again in the inscriptions. The books that she chose to display were the 'power books' of the day, carrying the message of cultural, philosophical and religious values that Lady Anne expected her descendants to understand and to uphold.

A close study of the books in the Appleby Triptych reveals three Holy Bibles, two editions of the Psalms of David, works of the ancients including Plutarch, Ovid, Marcellinus, and Seneca, and the more recent English and Continental writers -- Chaucer, Castiglione, Cervantes, Camden, Spencer, Jonson, Sidney, Daniel and Donne among many others. It is the presence of many of books used as sources for Shakespeare's work, (Montaigne's *Essays* and Gerard's *Herball*) as well as the appearance of writers such as Ben Jonson and Edmund Spenser that make the absence of Shakespeare -- or anything representative of his work -- a surprising omission.

Cutting points out that this "lacunae" is all the more noticeable in the context of Lady Anne Clifford's life and circumstances. She was an integral part of the aristocracy with immediate sway over seven earldoms (she herself was a triple countess and a triple baroness). Her diplomatic skills had been well-honed in an excruciating 40 year legal battle over her inheritance, and she was an inveterate keeper of records and diaries, an indefatigable restorer of castles, a builder of churches and monuments to family and friends, and most important of all to the question at hand, the wife of one of Shakespeare's patrons. She was in the right place at the right time, and with the right resume to know who Shakespeare was. It begs the question why she left Shakespeare out of her Great Picture, excluding him in her endorsement of literary giants.

Saturday evening was the traditional banquet at the University Club. The Concordia University choir sang beautifully, speakers included Prof. Daniel Wright and Dr. Charles Schlimpert, University President. Gary Withers presented developments on the new Shakespeare Authorship Research Center to be housed in the new library, and the new master's program in authorship at Concordia, which is associated with the new master's program at Brunel University under the direction of Prof. Leahy. The award

for scholarly excellence was conferred on William Farina, author of *De Vere as Shakespeare*, and Claire Van Kampen and Paul Nicholson both received awards for artistic excellence. The poster of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt about the Identity of William Shakespeare was prominently displayed, later to be signed by 10 members of the Concordia faculty and administration.

The final day of presentations began with Deena Lindstedt's presentation, "Shakespeare's Identity: Perhaps a Woman?" Lindstedt argued that the manner in which Shakespeare portrayed women so sympathetically suggests a female author (or perhaps a male author under the influence of a brilliant woman). Elizabeth Trentham, Oxford's second wife, is her favored candidate for claiming the authorship mantle.

The next two talks featured issues related to the Droeshout engraving of Shakespeare in the First Folio. Jan Scheffer, PhD, found many representations of Martin Droeshout's art, and projected numerous examples of his engravings. The superb quality of his other engravings contrasted with the well-recognized artistic distortions in the Folio image. Drawing attention to the multiple, peculiar anatomic errors in the Shakespeare image, Scheffer suggested that these distortions were intentional, that the artist was conveying a message of skepticism as to the authenticity of the figure in the portrait. Darby Mitchell Degrand also noted the numerous artistic mistakes in the Droeshout, and suggested that the image could represent the top half of the image on a playing card, and that inverting the image to look at it upside down may reveal new meanings. She concluded that there are heraldic symbols hidden in the Droeshout image, and that Will of Stratford wrote the works, but collaborated with Marlowe and Raleigh.

Professors Ren Draya and Michael Delahoyde then spoke on "Around the Play in 80 Lines: The Opening and Ending of *Othello*." Prof. Draya started by citing that *Othello* is clearly based on an untranslated Italian source, Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, a book found in William Cecil's library. The author of *Othello*, Draya argued, was clearly well versed in Venetian politics and protocol, especially in the details about the Venetian Senate. The play largely consists of paired dialogues, and the 42 opening lines between Iago and Roderigo provide a sense of immediacy, compression and anger. The playwright immediately establishes the theme of spiteful resentment based on an intense disappointment, and the motif of the strong man, always Iago, manipulating the weaker with persuasive and abusive language. Prof. Michael Delahoyde concluded the presentation on *Othello*, focusing on allusions to rare words in the text and the reference to the "Spartan dog" (5.2.362) reflecting familiarity with Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War.

The final paper of the conference was presented by Prof. Sandra Schruijer from the University of Utrecht, and was based on preliminary results of a survey she has been conducting on attitudes, arguments, and debating style between Stratfordians and non-Stratfordians. Her sample is still small, and includes a little over 50 respondents, the majority being Oxfordians. Her survey results suggested the primary problem with the case for Edward de Vere is the absence of agreement about the reason for authorial anonymity. Readers interested in participating in the survey, which will take only a few minutes, can contact Prof. Schruijer at: schruijer@yahoo.com and she will email you the

(*Stonewalling, cont. from p. 6*)

gullible out-of-towners?

### **The Butcher's Apprentice Vs. the Deer Poacher**

Basically there were two of these yarns: John Aubrey's witty butcher's apprentice of 1681, and Rowe's horse-holding deer poacher of 1709. In Appendix I of his massive examina-

---

**It may be that in the placid academic ivory tower where Wells and his fellow academicians spend their days pondering book offers and accumulating credentials, "modesty" and "generosity" might be considered real motivations for hiding one's identity, but as writers of the really important stuff, the kind posterity chooses to remember, writers like Cicero, Ovid, Dante, Byron, Voltaire, Gorky, Solzhenitzyn, Vaclav Hamel, Salman Rushdie and all the others who've suffered prison or exile (or worse) over the centuries because of who they were and what they wrote can testify, "credit" was hardly the issue.**

---

tion of the early modern grammar schools, *Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, T.W. Baldwin provides a detailed examination of that part of the biography based on these anecdotes, terming it "a progressive fiction" (2.681-89). Although orthodoxy has been happy to embrace Baldwin's evidence for a possible grammar school education for William, they continue to ignore his equally thorough deconstruction of the contradictory Stratford origin myths, showing how Aubrey's butcher's boy was superseded by one who sounded a little bit more, well, up-market.

Next Wells launches into the usual list of contemporary references to Shakespeare the poet playwright, as if that proved

(Continued on p. 14)

(*Stonewalling, Cont. from p. 13*)

anything. Ignoring the very foundation of our argument, namely that all of these refer to the poet who, for purposes of privacy, had borrowed, or more likely, purchased the use of William's name, Wells offers as a specific instance, the poet Richard Barnfield's 1598 praise, finishing with: "The men may have been friends." Ay, there's the rub, isn't it, that "may have"? How many "may haves" does it take to create another million-dollar-advance biography in hardback?

### The thundering silence

With the authorship thesis as our aegis, we are just as

---

**Wells may use the term "heresy" for the authorship question in jest, but it is significant nonetheless, for, as Yale professor Harold Bloom and others have pointed out, the Stratford biography has taken on the nature of a religious sect. The definition of a cult is that the members believe something that can't be proven. (If it could, it wouldn't be effective in creating a separation between the believers and the outsiders.) It is the Stratford believers who are the cult, not we, "the unsatisfied" of Hamlet's dying plea.**

---

free to propose that Barnfield knew nothing whatsoever of the elusive William, who was proving so difficult for the London tax collectors to locate both that year and the year before. We hold that Barnfield was speaking of an altogether different spirit, one who genuinely believed, to his sorrow, Iago's motto that "who steals my purse steals trash," a motto that would no doubt have caused the litigious William to snicker into his hempen sleeve. And so on and so on as Wells hits the high spots, from Meres to Harvey to Jonson and Drummond—all utterly beside the point. Of course the literati knew the "honey-flowing" poet Shakespeare of London, whether personally or only from his works. Who was not known to them was the lawsuit-flowing grain dealer from Stratford, a man barely capable of painstakingly drawing on six legal documents what was meant to be a signature.

As for the statement that "Shakespeare's own published works" and the "engraved portrait of the author" in the First

Folio, are any sort of evidence that the two men are the same, we can only answer with another question: Why, confronted with the six illegible signatures, should we take a printed name on title pages and the absurd Droeshout cartoon as evidence of genuine authorship? Whether printed on the title pages of plays or in a list of actors in plays written and published by Ben Jonson or on a list of the company sharers, or in a Court exchequer list of actor payees, or in later legal wrangles over the ownership of shares, all this so-called evidence derives from a small group of theater insiders who were either actors with the Lord Chamberlain's Men or in some way dependent on their success. Our thesis rests on the obvious fact that if the author's identity was hidden behind another man's name, it's because his identity had to be kept a secret. To invalidate this thesis it's necessary to provide evidence that comes from some other source than the very group whose fortunes would have depended on keeping that secret.

### A Great Reckoning

Wells accuses us of inventing "conspiracy theories that somehow Shakespeare (if they admit that he existed) was the pen name of writers who were so modest that they not only concealed the fact that they had written the greatest plays ever, but also were so generous as to allow an obscure actor to take all the credit."

Have they forgotten the history of the period, the anti-Catholic repression, the execution of Campion, the murder of Marlowe, the hanging of Barrow and Greenwood, the imprisonment of Kyd and Jonson, the striking off of John Stubbs' writing hand?

As with his great role models of the past, the primary issues for Shakespeare the writer were 1) staying alive and 2) continuing to write, as he explains through his alter ego, the exiled courtier Touchstone in Act 3, Scene 3, *As You Like It*. This seemingly offhand remark: "When a man's good words are not understood . . . it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a small room," has been rightly interpreted by scholars as a not-so-subtle reference to the 1593 murder of the playwright Christopher Marlowe. Touchstone conflates a well-known phrase from Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, "infinite riches in a little room," with "the reckoning," or tavern bill, that was the supposed issue over which the young poet was stabbed to death by Robert Cecil's government agents in a "little room" in a hostelry in Deptford. Why "great"? Because Marlowe's fate was a warning to his fellow writers that if they did not shut up, they would suffer the same, a warning serious enough to result in the death or disappearance of all but two of these writers (Nashe and Lodge) in the months immediately following Marlowe's removal. Is not that sufficient reason to cause a writer to hide his identity, or if already hidden, to hide it even more securely? And did he not tell us his reasons, via Touchstone, so explicitly that anyone—anyone that is but a Shakespeare academic—could figure it out?

### Jonson's job and the Stratford bust

Considering what evidence is to be found in his dedicatory ode in the First Folio, because Ben Jonson owed his living and his status to the good will of the actors and patrons who, if our theory is correct, were intent on keeping their playwright's identity a secret, anything written by Jonson on the subject of Shakespeare should never be taken at face value. Whatever the identity of the

---

**Instead of ridiculing us for the fact that we've offered a host of names as possible alternatives to the author of the six illegible signatures, Wells would do well to realize that where there's so much smoke there really must be fire. Books about the possible authorship of peripheral figures like the Queen or Henry Neville would not find publishers if they weren't aware that there's enough of a concern over the authorship issue that they can count on making a profit, however absurd the attribution. It's a cheap trick to continue to throw Oxford's name in with those of Bacon, Marlowe, and Queen Elizabeth, and, be assured, Master Wells, it won't work forever.**

---

true author, it would have been Jonson's duty to silence what must have been intense inquiry by making the connection once and for all between the works and the grain dealer from Stratford. To send this precious cargo of literature out to posterity would have been impossible without clearing up as best as could be done any questions about his identity. Not only was the First Folio not published until seven years after William of Stratford's death, it was also not published until his wife too had died (by a few months), thus (possibly) leaving no one who knew the truth to ply with difficult questions. As Oxfordians Richard Whalen (7-24) and Richard Kennedy (online) have made clear, the Trinity Church monument is evidence only of a long ongoing and rather dismal effort to turn

what was originally a memorial to William's father, John Shakespeare the wool dealer, into one befitting Shakespeare the writer.

Wells may use the term "heresy" in jest, but it is significant nonetheless, for, as Yale professor Harold Bloom and others have pointed out, the Stratford biography has taken on the nature of a religious cult. The definition of a cult is that the members believe something that can't be proven. It is the Stratford believers who are the cult, not we, "the unsatisfied" of Hamlet's dying plea. Instead of ridiculing us for the fact that we've offered a host of names as possible alternatives to the author of the six illegible signatures, Wells would do well to realize that where there's so much smoke there really must be fire. Books about the possible authorship of peripheral figures like the Queen or Henry Neville would not find publishers if they weren't aware that there's enough of a concern over the authorship issue that they can count on making a profit, however absurd the attribution. It's a cheap trick to continue to throw Oxford's name in with those of Bacon, Marlowe, and Queen Elizabeth, and, be assured, Master Wells, it won't work forever.

### The Sound of Silence

According to Professor Wells:

The most common arguments that Shakespeare of Stratford could not have written the works are that he is not known to have traveled overseas, that he was of relatively humble origins and that he came from a small provincial town where he could not have received a good enough education to have written the plays. The facts are that the works show no knowledge of countries that could not have been obtained from books or from conversation, that you don't have to be an aristocrat to be a great writer—Jonson was the son of a bricklayer, Marlowe's father was a cobbler—and that Stratford had a good grammar school whose pupils received a far more rigorous education in the classics than most university graduates today.

Here Wells shows once again his lack of understanding of the argument. Whoever would claim that only an aristocrat can be a great writer would be a fool indeed. As for Jonson and Marlowe, since their points of view are so obviously derived from their own humble backgrounds, how does that relate to a Stratford origin for Shakespeare, whose works are just as obviously written from an aristocratic point of view? As for the Stratford grammar school, Baldwin's great book does indeed show that it could have given William a decent fundamental understanding of Latin and the lighter classics, that is, had William in fact ever attended it, for which there is no evidence nor even any likelihood. The only solid evidence with regard to his possible grammar school education testifies against it, namely the pathetic attempts at a signature on six legal documents. Had he attended long enough to get the Latin education described by Baldwin, he would also have had enough

(cont. on p. 16)

(Stonewalling, cont. from p. 15)

time to learn how to write his own name. Their wretched quality has been “explained” by the onset of palsy and/or the imminence of death. Since there is no other evidence of either, these notions must join a great many other imaginative conjectures frequently and recklessly proffered as facts until some evidence is forthcoming.

Wells also shows no understanding of how great literature gets written. What great work was ever patched together from things read in translations or overheard in conversation? Great literature always arises from within, from personal experience and from a profound connection to major sources. The works of Shakespeare should tell us just about everything we need to know about the author. Understanding this, a British schoolteacher managed to find him in history and present him to the world in 1920, but by that time, as the respected Shakespeare scholar Frederick Boas tells us in his *Shakespeare and the Universities* (1923), the British academics had actually just begun (1863) to pay attention to their now precious Bard (82). When in the latter half of the nineteenth century the universities finally became aware that the lowly scribbler of cheap vernacular entertainments was worthy of their attentions, it was only following the efforts of generations of nonacademics, actors (Garrick, Kean, Kemble, Booth), writers and critics (Pope, Johnson, Coleridge, Hazlitt), independent scholars (Steevens, Malone), and enthusiastic audiences that the universities finally turned their attention to Shakespeare, late by about 300 years. So it should come as no surprise to discover that Wells and his confrères are merely continuing to maintain what is in fact a four-hundred-year-old tradition of academic stonewalling with regard to Shakespeare, both the man and his works.

### An Overwhelming Lack of Evidence

According to Wells:

... before you start saying that Shakespeare could not have written the plays and poems that for the first 150 years or so of their existence everyone knew to be his, you have to disprove the evidence that he did. It's no use saying that “he couldn't have known enough” or “he didn't travel enough” or “he wasn't aristocratic enough” in face of the overwhelming evidence from his own time that a man named William Shakespeare from Stratford-upon-Avon wrote the plays and poems for which he is famous.

Overwhelming? What evidence there is that the writer and the Stratford grain dealer are one and the same comes from one source alone, the actors of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, their patrons, their other playwrights, and their printers. Otherwise, as Oxfordian Ramon Jiménez has detailed, there is nothing but silence from his contemporaries. Where one would expect to find anecdotes about the popular playwright in their letters and publications, there is no mention of him, good, bad, or indif-

ferent. The 1592 reference to “Shake-scene” in Robert Greene's *Groatsworth* that orthodox Shakespeareans claim for him is far more understandable as a swipe at the stage manager and first English theatrical superstar Edward Alleyn (Wraight 197). Of Shakespeare there is no mention by John Chamberlain in any of his chatty letters; no mention by historian William Camden in his exhaustive tome on the important men of his time (*Brittania*, 1617-25); and most damning of all, nothing from his fellow poet, Michael Drayton, also a native of Warwickshire, who, in his long, detailed portrait of 1612 of every town in his home county, has, in place of Jonson's “soul of the age,” but two minor characters to offer as the best known citizens of Stratford-on-Avon; this in 1612, by which time over a dozen of Shakespeare's plays had

---

**Here Wells shows once again his lack of understanding of the argument. Whoever would claim that only an aristocrat can be a great writer would be a fool indeed. As for Jonson and Marlowe, since their points of view are so obviously derived from their own humble backgrounds, how does that relate to a Stratford origin for Shakespeare, whose works are just as obviously written from an aristocratic point of view?**

---

been published over variations of the name William Shakespeare, while his company, the King's Men, was not only the leading acting company in England, but was fast becoming one of the most successful commercial enterprises of the Jacobean era.

The supposed “overwhelming evidence” is anything but. What is “overwhelming” is this silence.

### Works cited

- Breight, Curtis C. *Surveillance, Militarism, and Drama in the Elizabethan Era*. New York: St. Martin's, 1996.
- Boas, Frederick. *Shakespeare and the Universities*. (1923). New York: Blom, 1971.
- Jiménez, Ramon. “Camden, Drayton, Greene, Hall and Cooke: Five Eyewitnesses Who Saw Nothing.” *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* 38.4 (2002): 1, 12-16.



\_\_\_\_\_. "Shakespeare in Stratford and London: Five more Eyewitnesses Who Saw Nothing." *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* 41.1 (2005): 3-7.

Hume, Martin A.S. *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft*. (1898). New York: Haskell House, 1968.

Kennedy, Richard. "The Woolpack Man." <http://webpages.charter.net/stairway/woolpackman.htm>

Whalen, Richard. "The Stratford Bust: A Monumental Fraud." *The Oxfordian* 8 (2005): 7-24.

Wraight, A.D. *In Search of Christopher Marlowe*. London: MacDonald, 1965.

**(Charlton Ogburn, cont. from p. 7)**

Chinese troops could get the materiel needed to fight a war.

Ogburn would later write a book about it, *The Marauders*, the story of a ranger-like regiment that became known as Merrill's Marauders, after its commanding officer Brig. Gen. Frank D. Merrill. When it was published in 1959, *New York Times* reviewer S.L.A. Marshall called Ogburn's book "one of the noblest and most sensitive books by any American about his own experiences in war. It is good history. Eyewitness reporting at its most accurate best... No old campaigner will read it dry-eyed, nor will any other who feels compassion for the race of man."

The Marauders' trial by ordeal began in February 1944, and ended with the capture of a strategic airbase at Myitkyina (mish-i-naw) nearly four months later. During that time they slogged some 750 miles (some say more) over 6,000-foot heights (some say more) and through torrid jungles of the Himalayas where both clothes and skin rotted in the monsoon season. They fought the Japanese in five major battles and more than 30 skirmishes. They finally won. Some might say by a nose.

Of the 3,000 who began the mission, reports are that 123 were killed, 293 were wounded, eight were missing and, except for about 200, the rest were hospitalized with dysentery, typhus, malaria, psychological disorders, and unidentified fevers. Their leader, Brig. Gen. Merrill, had a heart attack, his second; he then came down with malaria. "... one platoon," wrote Ogburn, "cut open the seats of its trousers so as to be handicapped as little as possible by dysentery in any combat emergency..."

During the months they were in combat they had nothing to eat but K-rations. "We were perpetually famished," Ogburn writes. "Not only were K-rations lacking in bulk, but every fourth or fifth day we ran out of them. We had two conditions - one in which we felt unfed, the other in which we were unfed."

Unit medical records note that anorexia accompanied by nausea and vomiting was quite common, and weight loss averaged 20 pounds per man among men whose training before combat had trimmed all unnecessary fat from their bodies. What the Marauders were burning for energy was muscle. By June 1944 they were burnt out.

Following discharge from the Army in 1946, Ogburn, because of his experience in the China-Burma-India theater and in military intelligence, was lured into the State Department where he established a desk on Indonesian Affairs. He later would serve on a United States delegation seeking a peaceful resolution to political unrest in Indonesia. From there his attention focused on Vietnam where he expressed his views on U.S. policy unencumbered by diplomatic euphemism.

In 1950 he opposed U.S. support of a government in South Vietnam headed by Emperor Bao Dai and wrote that "any supposition that he could succeed or that a French army in Indochina could possibly be an asset to us could be entertained only by one totally ignorant of Asian realities."

The "Asian realities" were that Ho Chi Minh's forces had slain 50,000 French soldiers since 1945 and French officers were being lost at a faster rate than they were being graduated from officer schools. In addition, France was spending nearly half of its military budget in Indochina just to "hold the line." Furthermore the Vietnamese regarded the playboy emperor, Bao Dai, with ridicule and contempt. Then, finally, there was the mindset of Ho Chi Minh's forces, their willingness to fight to the last man in the last battle, their infinite Asian patience. And thus Ogburn's predictions became reality. The French army was defeated at Dienbienphu in 1954. And Bao Dai retreated to Paris.

With a Harper & Brothers book contract in his pocket for *The Marauders*, and a hefty advance, Ogburn left the State Department in 1957 to pursue a full-time career in writing, something he had been chasing since college, but had been interrupted by World War II. Over the next 27 years he would write a dozen books on subjects ranging from war to railroads to natural history to Shakespeare. He wrote about birch trees and birds and winter beaches, overpopulation, pollution, and public policy. Much of what he wrote found its way into such leading periodicals as *Harper's*, *Smithsonian*, *American Heritage*, *Atlantic*, *National Geographic*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and *The New Republic*. Along the way he kept his oar in on Vietnam and despite strong differences of opinion, he remained on good terms with State Department officials.

In 1962 he was invited by Secretary of State Dean Rusk to join his staff as a part-time speechwriter. He and Rusk had a lot in common. They were nearly the same age, Rusk two years older. They were both Georgians. They both served in the China-Burma-India theater in World War II. And in 1950-51 they were both in Far Eastern Affairs at the State Department. As assistant Secretary of State, Rusk was Ogburn's boss. On Vietnam policy, however, they were worlds apart. Rusk consistently defended U.S. military involvement in Vietnam.

Ogburn wrote two speeches for Rusk that were never used. Perhaps that was because he pulled no punches, as the opening sentence of a letter he wrote the editor of *The Washington Post*, published Jan. 2, 1966, underscores:

What we are demonstrating in Vietnam is that a powerful and

*(Continued on p. 18)*

(Ogburn, cont. from p. 17)

highly industrialized nation can wreak havoc and carnage upon a small nation largely of peasants.

One wonders how Lyndon Johnson might have reacted to that boiling comment by a former State Department officer. And one also wonders where on J. Edgar Hoover's lists of whatever Ogburn might have been.



Charlton Ogburn, Jr., was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 15, 1911, the son of Charlton Greenwood and Dorothy Stevens Ogburn. He would later drop the Jr. designation as his father had earlier dropped the middle name Greenwood.

His parents were from prominent Georgia families whose southern roots ran centuries deep. He was of the 11th generation of American Ogburns. Forebears came to Virginia from England in 1652 and settled 18 miles from Jamestown. His mother's American ties went back to the early 1700s. Ancestors on both sides of the family fought against the English in the Revolutionary War and for both the Union and Confederacy in the Civil War.

---

**In 1950 Ogburn opposed U.S. support  
of a government in South Vietnam  
headed by Emperor Bao Dai and wrote  
that “any supposition that he could  
succeed or that a French army in  
Indochina could possibly be an asset  
to us could be entertained only by one  
totally ignorant of Asian realities.”**

---

Charlton Sr. was a very successful corporation lawyer who would establish offices in Washington, DC, New York City and Paris and later become general counsel for the American Federation of Labor and affiliated unions, such as teamsters and garment workers.

In 1920 he moved his wife and nine-year-old son from Savannah to New York City. There Charlton Jr. was enrolled in a succession of progressive schools: the Horace Mann Rooftop School, so-called because it had a play area on its sixth-story roof; the pioneer experimental Walden School where children made their own toys and wrote and produced their own plays without adult assistance; and The Lincoln School of Teachers College, Columbia University, an educational laboratory endowed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and largely invented by Abraham Flexner, an eminent progressive educationist. Flexner was also the creator and first director of The Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton and was chiefly responsible for enticing Albert Einstein to come

to America and head up the Institute's physics department.

The Lincoln School became the high point of the progressive school movement in America. It taught students how to apply math and other sciences to life. It did not teach Latin and Greek classics. It eschewed the traditional foundations of elite culture despite that its students were largely from the elite culture. It taught “modern” courses, like “social science” a curriculum combining geography, history and civics, an idea that would catch on nationwide.

All of John D. Jr.'s five sons attended The Lincoln School. “The Rockefeller boys,” according to one account, “walked or roller-skated up Fifth Avenue until they tired, at which time they would get into the back of the limousine [their father] ordered to crawl along beside them.” Laurence Rockefeller, who would become a leading conservationist, was a member of Ogburn's class of 1928, 44 students of whom Ogburn was valedictorian.

Others of Ogburn's class included Louis J. Halle, Jr., by the late 1940s a senior policy planner at the State Department and later professor of Foreign Affairs at the Graduate

Institute of International Studies in Geneva; Harmon Goldstone, a noted New York City architect who designed the ultra-modern Trylon and Perisphere for the 1939 World's Fair, and in 1968 became the city's first Preservation Commission chairman, saving historic buildings from the wrecking ball; and Jack Appel, a prominent New York City psychiatrist. Rockefeller, Halle, Goldstone, Appel and Ogburn maintained lifetime friendships.

From age 12 to 18, Ogburn spent his summers at a dairy farm in Westchester County, New York, called Silton. At first his parents paid \$10 a week for his bed and board, and 12-year-old Charlton offset the charge by earning 10 cents an hour doing a variety of odd jobs. At the top of his summer dairy-hand career, when he was promoted to “full hired hand,” Ogburn was pulling down \$50 a month, plus bed and board. Not altogether bad for a teenager in 1928.

The farm was owned and operated by Cuthbert M. Sidebottom. A remarkable name for a remarkable man. Of Mr. Sidebottom, Ogburn wrote in a caption to a family album picture of the man: “I thought the world of Mr. Sidebottom, a man of character as strong as his nature was gentle, a model of a gentleman...”

Following The Lincoln School, Ogburn went to Harvard from which he graduated *cum laude* in 1932 and then took jobs in the publishing industry as an editor and book reviewer. Viking Press was an employer as was the Book-of-the-Month Club and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. During this time he took a trip to South America and up the Amazon River. This and other of his life experiences would wend their way into his novel *Gold of the River Sea*. The novel's hero, Julian Tate, had been brought to New York at the age of 10 from a town where he attended a “yellow clapboard schoolhouse... set in a grove of wateroaks just back from a salt river on the coast of Georgia.” In his mid-forties, Tate quit his job with what is alluded to as the State Department to become a painter. Substitute “writer” for “painter” or “wrote” for “painted” and you have Ogburn.

“In the years when I worked for the Government, I painted after hours whenever I could and as long as I could, but I was only waiting until I should be able to give all my time to it – until



General Merrill with two Marauders deep in Burma, 1944. Charlton Ogburn was the Company's Communications Officer. Long before 1950, he understood "Asian Realities."

I had put by enough money and acquired confidence enough in my ability to make a go of it. When I went to work for the Government, I was not looking for a career," Tate says. "I was looking for a means of subsistence... Long hours became long years. Responsibilities grew, and with them authority. I played my part in promoting the good and constructive purposes of the United States Government from ever higher levels, over ever larger areas."

Ogburn's family had formed many connections to the publishing industry. His father wrote several books on the legal profession and labor law. His father's brother, Fielding, was a much-published and renowned professor of sociology at Chicago University and head of its sociology department. His mother, who wrote, by Ogburn's estimation, "very literate" mystery novels published by Little Brown, had a brother, George Stevens, who entered Harvard at age 14 and graduated at 17. He would become editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature* and then vice president and editor-in-chief of Lippincott & Sons, a post he held for more than 30 years. Ogburn's uncles' positions would have provided some entree into the publishing industry, if his mother's and father's had not.

In May 1937, Ogburn's parents received their copy of *The Saturday Review of Literature*. Among features was an article by Charles Wisner Barrell describing a book entitled *Shakespeare Identified as Edward de Vere 17th Earl of Oxford*, published in England in 1920. The author, J. Thomas Looney, was an English schoolmaster who had taught Shakespeare for many years and had become dissatisfied with the conventional wisdom that the author was from Stratford-Upon-Avon and had never ventured beyond the confines of the English shore. From his study of Shakespeare's plays, Looney deduced 17 characteristics he thought the author possessed and, as Ogburn writes, "set out to comb the annals of the Elizabethan age to see who would come closest to possessing them." After several years of scholarly inquiry he was finally able to fit the slipper on Edward de Vere.

Among Looney's observations was that all but one of the 37 plays generally accepted as Shakespeare's involve court life. He concluded that because of the way kings and queens, earls and countesses move on and off stage "as to the manner born" that Shakespeare would have "high social rank and even a close proximity to royalty itself."

He also thought Shakespeare was something of a snob, incapable or unwilling to give "ordinary citizens" dignity. "They are the automata walking woodenly onto the stage to speak for their class. His 'lower orders' never display that virile dignity and largeness of character which poets like Burns, who knew the class from within, portray in their writings." And he gave them demeaning names, such as Elbow, Dull, Dogberry, and Snout.

---

**During this time he took a trip to South America and up the Amazon River. This and other of his life experiences would wend their way into his novel, *Gold of the River Sea*. The novel's hero, Julian Tate, had been brought to New York at the age of 10 from a town where he attended a "yellow clapboard schoolhouse... set in a grove of wateroaks just back from a salt river on the coast of Georgia." In his mid-forties, Tate quit his job with what is alluded to as the State Department to become a painter. Substitute "writer" for "painter" or "wrote" for "painted" and you have Ogburn.**

---

There was also the question of education. Although the Stratford man may have attended school, there is no evidence that he did. Neither parent could read or write, nor could his wife, nor at least one of his two daughters. If he were the poet/playwright, why would he not marry a woman with whom he could discuss his writing, or make the effort to teach his wife and daughters to read and write so they could appreciate his work?

And why would such a poet, at the height of his power, suddenly retire from the excitement of writing for the London stage and take up the humdrum life of a market town grain dealer never

(Continued on p. 20)

(Ogburn, cont. from p. 19)

to pen a single line again?

Charlton Sr. and Dorothy Ogburn would be so captivated by Looney's book they would launch into years of study and research and in 1952 have their own book, *This Star of England*, published. It was a 1,300-page biography of the Earl of Oxford and an examination of how he revealed himself in Shakespeare's plays. The book, wrote Ogburn, "attracted many enthusiastic adherents. Harvard professor William Y. Elliott called it 'one of the great books of our time.'" Beyond that, the influence on academia would, at best, be described as minimal.

Ten years later, in 1962, Ogburn and his mother would co-author another attempt to attract readers to the Earl of Oxford, *Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Name*. It too would enjoy limited success. But undaunted, like the inexorable march of Merrill's Marauders over the Himalayas, Ogburn trudged on, sandwiching Oxford/Shakespeare between the bread-and-butter work of his magazine articles and books.

In 1974 John Bethell, editor of *Harvard Magazine*, courageously accepted Ogburn's offer to submit an article on the authorship issue saying, "Our magazine is willing and eager to touch the untouchable." "The Man Shakespeare Was Not (and Who He Was)" was the cover story of the November issue. When it hit the stands, some of Harvard academia went apoplectic.

Professor Gwynne Evans, editor of the strictly orthodox Riverside edition of Shakespeare's works said he would not "waste time reading it if I had a copy" and called it "half-baked guff." Professor Walter Kaiser asked if future articles would assert "that the earth is flat" and that "Queen Victoria was a Peruvian transvestite" and accused the editor of "irresponsible journalism" and of giving "idiocies a Harvard cachet."

In all, some 30 letters, pro and con, appeared in *Harvard Magazine* over the next six issues. Until that time no issue of the magazine had raised such a response. To Ogburn it was very gratifying and showed such interest in the topic as to spur him on to write *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*.

Some claim the Shakespeare authorship issue dates to at least the 1780s when an Anglican priest named James Wilmot, living near Stratford, tried to write a biography of the Stratford man and found no evidence that he was ever a writer of any kind. Searching the countryside for

---

**Ogburn's family had formed many connections to the publishing industry. His father wrote several books on the legal profession and labor law. His father's brother, Fielding, was a much-published and renowned professor of sociology at Chicago University and head of its sociology department. His mother, who wrote, by Ogburn's estimation, "very literate" mystery novels published by Little Brown, had a brother, George Stevens, who entered Harvard at age 14 and graduated at 17. He would become editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature*...**

---

a radius of 50 miles he uncovered not a book, not a diary, not a letter, not a page of manuscript, nothing of a literary nature either penned or owned by the man from Stratford. He found nothing and he found it in stunning abundance.

By the 1850s dissatisfaction with the Stratford man surfaced in the endorsement of Francis Bacon as a possible author.

After Bacon, there was Christopher Marlowe, and the earls of Derby and Rutland, the Countess Pembroke and even Queen Elizabeth.

Dissenters, those who cast doubt on or rejected the Stratford man, include Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Greenleaf Whittier, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Henry James, Otto von Bismarck, Benjamin Disraeli, Sigmund Freud; actors Charlie Chaplin, Leslie Howard, Orson Welles, John Gielgud and Derek Jacobi; and Supreme Court justices Lewis Powell, Jr., Harry A. Blackmun, and John Paul Stevens.

Since the 1920s the leading contender for the title of Shakespeare authorship has been the Earl of Oxford. Whether he eventually succeeds will depend on how successful Oxfordians are in continuing to press their case. In the last 20 years, thanks to the groundwork laid by Charlton Ogburn, they've made some significant inroads. But old allegiances die hard.

The stalwarts of academia will continue to cleave to the Stratford man as tenaciously as The Church did to Ptolemy. To accept Oxford as Shakespeare is too fundamental a change in doctrine and certain to cause much distress in orthodox academic circles, not to mention the economic upheaval in Stratford where millions are spent annually by people eager to see and purchase memorabilia of "the birthplace."

For the foreseeable future the mystery of who Shakespeare was will continue largely unresolved. And some would ask: So what? What difference does it make? What does it matter who wrote the works of Shakespeare?

In 1996, Dr. Sheila Tombe, editor of *Apostrophe*, a publication of the University of South Carolina at Beaufort, asked Ogburn the same question, to which he responded:

If it doesn't matter who wrote the plays of Shakespeare, then it doesn't matter who wrote anything. All literary biography then is a waste of time. Furthermore, I think one can't read the plays of Shakespeare without a sense of indebtedness to the author. You want to see credit given where credit is due, and

the plays take on a more intimate and deeper meaning when you see what lay behind them, your eyes are opened and you see things in them you never saw before; and, I think they gain in richness and in the hold they have on us. I think the question of who Shakespeare was has presented us with the greatest mystery story in the arts. And who is immune to a mystery story?

Certainly Charlton Ogburn wasn't.

---

Jack Clawson, a former journalist, public relations executive, and church administrator, was a Beaufort neighbor of Charlton Ogburn's for 14 years. He and his wife, Alice, met Charlton and Vera Ogburn in June 1984 at a neighborhood porch party where they learned of Ogburn's forthcoming book, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. He later bought a copy and has been hooked on Edward de Vere ever since.

Charlton Ogburn's daughter, Dr. Holly Ogburn Martin, provided many supporting documents for this article.

---

(News, cont. from p. 5)

The London Times recently asked, "is there a subtler comic actor in London?" The interactive script, "The BIG Secret 'I am Shakespeare' Webcam Daytime Chatroom Show" may have one of the clunkiest titles in theatrical history, but if the play lives up to its potential it could well be a hit. The play, which runs at the Chichester Minerva Theatre through Septembet 8, will feature a unique interactive format, in which the audience will be encouraged to keep their mobile phones ready to phone in questions and participate in the onstage debate over authorship. Alex Hassell will play Edward de Vere. "Oxford lived an incredibly full and controversial life," explained Hassell to Argus reporter Bella Todd, "He was humiliated and discredited by the court.

He ran away to Italy and was brought back by the Queen....Shakespeare's life has no experience of any of the themes of the plays, whereas they're almost an autobiography of Oxford's. Either he wrote them, or someone else was writing them about him." Details online: <http://www.theargus.co.uk/display.var.1616431.0.0.php>

### **Brunel University and Shakespeare Authorship Trust Sponsor 2007 Silberrad Memorial Lectures**

The second annual Silberrad Memorial Lectures, co-sponsored by the Shakespeare Authorship Trust and Brunel University, features two world class Shakespearean actors, Sir Derek Jacobi and Mark Rylance, both passionate and articulate anti-Stratfordians. The series of four evening lectures in November (at the Globe on Bankside) begins with a November 1 evening with Jacobi and Rylance, in dialogue with Dr. William Leahy of Brunel University, "Reflections on the Authorship Controversy."

On November 8 the series will host Diana Price, author of *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography: New Evidence of an Authorship Problem* (2001, Greenwood Press). Price will speak on the theme "Shakespeare: Evidence of an Authorship Problem." On November 15 Dr. Penny McCarthy, a recent PhD in English Renaissance from Sussex University, will address the topic, "William Shakespeare and His Pseudonyms." McCarthy's book, *Pseudonymous Shakespeare*, was published by Ashgate in 2006. Professor Graham Holderness, Professor of English at the University of Hertfordshire, will end the series with a Nov. 22 lecture, "'For that I Came,': Shakespearean Selves." Holderness is the author of eight works of criticism, a volume of poetry, a novel, and numerous articles on literature and drama and theology.

John Silberrad was a generous and long-serving trustee of the Shakespeare Authorship Trust until his death in 2005. In order to honor his work and ensure that his contribution would not be forgotten, the Trust's annual lecture series is

dedicated to him. In November 2006 the Trust, in collaboration with the Friends of Shakespeare's Globe, inaugurated the lecture series with lectures by Brunel University's Professor Leahy, Charles Beauclerk, Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, and Richard Roe.

Further details are available online at the Shakespeare Authorship Trust website: <http://www.shakespeareanauthorship-trust.org.uk/pages/lectures.htm>.

### **Anderson Brings Oxford to Tawain**

Mark Anderson has returned from his Spring 2007 speaking tour of Taiwan, which included touchdowns in The English/Foreign Language and Literature departments at three Taiwanese universities. While invited to Taiwan by the English department of Tamkang University (Taipei), Anderson also enjoyed the hospitality of Soochow Univeristy and National Ilan University. All three departments hosted Anderson's lectures on the case for Edward de Vere as "Shakespeare." Anderson approached the lecture project like a "prosecuting attorney in the courtroom" but boasted that he has "cooler-looking graphics than most" prosecutors.

Both the lectures and one-on-one discussions throughout the visit, notes Anderson were "particularly noteworthy for the rationality with which the faculty, undergraduate and graduate students approached [authorship]. Of course there are many (though not enough) English profs and college/grad students today in the States and the U.K. who keep an open mind toward Edward de Vere and the authorship issue. But I have yet to find a college or university English department in an English-language-native country," continues Anderson, "where there aren't also card-carrying members of the *'Unhinge Me Here'* contingent. Anderson defines this vigorous reactionary movement as one in which members are predictably subject to spontaneous wolfman-like transformation "from a sane and reasonable person into a snarling and/or awkwardly grinning bearer of impatient discomfort. Mention

(Cont. on p. 22)



(News, cont from p. 21)

**Anderson defines this vigorous reactionary movement as one in which members are predictably subject to spontaneous wolfman-like transformation “from a sane and reasonable person into a snarling and/or awkwardly grinning bearer of impatient discomfort. Mention and combination of ‘Authorship,’ ‘Shakespeare,’ ‘Oxford,’ or ‘de Vere’ in the same sentence, and an Unhinger will suddenly see you as little more than an annoying pebble in their shoe.”**

and combination of ‘Authorship,’ ‘Shakespeare,’ ‘Oxford,’ or ‘de Vere’ in the same sentence, and an Unhinger will suddenly see you as little more than an annoying pebble in their shoe.” Anderson later added that Concordia University is an exception to this rule. So is Baltimore’s Coppin State.

(Mailbox, Continued from p. 3)

weren’t many holes in the argument I put forward. In all, I received emails from approximately sixty persons. Of this, all but nine were overwhelming supportive of the Oxfordian position endorsed in my debate piece. About half of the positive emails were from people I’ve already had the pleasure of knowing; the others were entirely new to me and represent, one can hope, a new wave of 21<sup>st</sup> century Oxfordian energy. Of the orthodox believers, only one offered a substantive factual challenge, and when I pointed out that his position was based on a misunderstanding, he stopped writing to me. Two writers were concerned to inform me that William Cecil was the Principle Secretary, not the Principal Secretary; one politely suggested that perhaps the *Outlook* editors were responsible for the error (they were not); the other took the opportunity of the error to sneer at my supposed lack of qualifications as an English professor. Perhaps the most entertaining of the emails was from someone named Jeffrey Davis, who informed that “there is a reason why it [sic] isn’t discussed in the academy: it’s silly.” I replied: “Thanks for your opinion. Best Wishes, Roger Stritmatter. Assistant Professor, Coppin State University.”

The one Stratfordian response from a fellow academician was more articulate, actually inviting a level of dialogue: “Why does it matter who wrote the plays? This seems like a generic fallacy writ large,” argued William Raymond Smith, an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and History at the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown.

To this I replied, in part: “To a certain extent, the answer to your question is, I think, a matter of perspective. We all have to make decisions, don’t we, about what

we chose to care about? From the point of view of global warming, or the death of the solar system, it probably doesn’t matter much who Shakespeare was. I happen to be a literary historian, so for me it is in part simply a professional obligation [to care about the question]. Unless we want to dispose, á la postmodernism, with

the very concept of authorship (and with it, it seems to me, with the very concepts of authority and responsibility), then the authorship of anything matters. Early modern writers would not have gone to the lengths they did to disguise their identities if the fact of their authorship did not matter. It mattered to them because, to early modern authorities, authorship was primarily a juridical category: authors were those held accountable for publications that were deemed a threat to the church or the state. An author was a warm body to punish. For a literary historian not to take an interest in this generic fact, as well as its specific applications, would be a dereliction of professionalism.

“For modern readers,” I continued, “the biography of an author is one of many circumstantial and contextual perspectives that guide us in making sense out of texts. We read, always, in relation to a real or imagined conception of what sort of a person the author was, and our understanding of his or her text is correspondingly affected by this schema.

“On the more specific matter of Shakespeare’s authorship, consider with me, if you will, the position of a pseudonymous Shakespeare. I’m not asking you to accept that this is what happened, only to entertain, as a thought experiment, that it might have been: Do you think it would have mattered to such an author who he was?....I encourage you to check out Mark Anderson’s 2005 *Shakespeare by Another Name*, or my 2001 PhD dissertation on the annotations and underlinings of Edward de Vere’s Geneva Bible....”

I’m not sure the hapless Professor Smith, whose theoretical objection to thinking about authorship is a common one in the era of postmodernism, had any idea of what he was in for. Regretably, he

did not respond directly to my email. I like to suppose he got hold of Mark Anderson's book and is about to join the Shakespeare Fellowship, but this is probably another unrealistic fantasy based on the implausible theory that even Stratfordians are capable of rationally changing their minds.

To C.J. McKay, "the stridency of your essay in the *Washington Post*...belies an element of 'gotcha' journalism, and is not at all convincing to me." McKay went on to assert that "literary genius has never required high status or privilege," a position with which I of course agree, both as a literary historian and a working class intellectual. I thanked him for writing and observed that "one man's stridency is another's passion....Having worked my way through graduate school to become the first person in the world to write a PhD dissertation about de Vere, I do have a unique perspective."

The most substantive and detailed challenge to my article came in the form of an email sent by Edwin M Yoder, Jr., the author (as I have since ascertained) of *Remembering Charles Kuralt* and a regular reviewer for the *New York Review of Books* and *Harpers*. Yoder was definitely on the offense; he was so confident of his ground, and so determined to put me down, that he copied his letter to Professor Wells, and to three different *Washington Post* emails, including both Sofia Smardz, the editor for the debate pieces, and the *Outlook* section desk. Yoder's email began, charming enough, "Dear Mr. Stritmatter, I am among those who believe, with your debating partner of last Sunday, that the Shakespearian authorship question is 'an immense monument to human folly.'" Yoder went on in his first paragraph to accuse me of "grotesquely misrepresent[ing] Henry James's view of this imaginary issue, to that end suppressing over half his letter to Violet Hunt of July 4, 1903."

This was in every respect a rather curious accusation. I hadn't just "suppressed" "over half" of James' letter – I'd "suppressed" almost the whole thing. In fact, in a 1400-word essay on the authorship question I could hardly be expected to enter into a detailed discussion of James' complex views about Shakespeare. My sole point about James was that he was

an anti-Stratfordian.

And, unfortunately for Mr. Yoder, he was.

But quasi-religious faith dies hard, and Mr. Yoder just couldn't stop harping about James' July 4 letter:

Your misleading citation from the Hunt letter (sic) leaves the impression that James believed Shakespeare to be a "fraud" in the sense of pretender or imposter. In fact, such "fraudulence" as lay, to his mind, in the Shakespeare

---

**The one Stratfordian response from a fellow academician was more articulate, actually inviting a level of dialogue:**

**"Why does it matter who wrote the plays? This seems like a generic fallacy writ large," argued William Raymond Smith, an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and History at the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown.**

---

legend was the work of mythologists who create an artistic legend and then venerate the legend rather than the art.

In other words, Yoder was trying to claim that James' was only an "anti-Bardolator," not an anti-Stratfordian. His method? He was reading James' mind. He signed off with a flourish that could have come out of the playbook of the wounded 16th century courtier: "I challenge you to explain – and correct – your misrepresentation of Henry James' view, at a minimum."

In reply I wrote, copying Ms. Smardz:

Thank you for taking the time to communicate with me regarding the Shakespearean question. The matter which

you raise has been treated, definitively in my estimation, by Charlton Ogburn in his 1984/1991 *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Myth*. I recommend the book as one that may shed some light on your generic confusion; in the meantime, I attach by pdf the three immediately relevant pages. You will perceive, I hope, that Ogburn's analysis (181) demonstrates, beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt, the flawed nature of your reasoning. James did not make in his own mind the distinction you intend to impose on him, between the words you cite and the position of a disciplined skeptic of the position you advocate. James was not one who would merely tinker with the traditional biography or rearrange a few deck chairs on the orthodox luxury liner.

In his book, in the pages I copied for Mr. Yoder, Ogburn references a previous dispute over James' position on authorship. In 1975 Harvard Professors Levin and Evans publicly accused Ogburn's *Harvard* magazine article on authorship of being a "tissue of distortions, half truths, misinterpretations, jugglings, and errors of fact" (Ogburn 181). As an illustration of these intellectual crimes, Levin and Evans took issue with Ogburn's citation of the famous quote by James and claimed that Ogburn had perpetuated an "injustice" against James by citing him as an anti-Stratfordian. Naturally this accusation prompted a reconsideration by anti-Stratfordians of what James' position actually was; it turns out that the Professors were as wrong about James as they were about most things pertaining to authorship. In a letter discovered by SOS newsletter editor Morse Johnson, James wrote to Ms. Hunt that Sir George Greenwood in *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* best expressed his views on the authorship question, and described Greenwood's book as "an extremely erudite, fair, and discriminating piece of work" (181).

"In case you are unfamiliar with Sir George Greenwood," I continued to Mr. Yoder,

I recommend that you acquaint your-

*(Continued on p. 24)*

(Mailbox, cont. from p. 23)

self with both the man and his writings. Like James, and like Whitman, he was not a Baconian; he was, however, the most articulate and compelling advocate of his generation for a view you summarily dismiss in your communication with a gratuitous insult. I realize that, for someone who believes as strongly as you seem to, that only fools and lunatics would dare to question savants like Professor Wells, it may be an uncomfortable truth to realize that all three of these men, like Mark Twain and many others, held views entirely incompatible with your own. That, however, is not my problem.

In closing, I respectfully suggest that the need for clarification is not mine, but yours. I challenge you to correct your misinterpretation of Henry James' position on authorship, which is made manifest not only the quotations you supply, but in those that you omitted – doubtless not from the intention to deceive, but merely because you have not studied the history of the question at hand and therefore could not be expected to understand their implications. I am also readily available at any time to debate in public the premise of your flawed interpretation.

Needless to say, Mr. Yoder is apparently better at issuing challenges than he is at accepting them. I never heard from him again.

— R. Stritmatter

#### Works Cited

Ogburn, Charlton. *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1984.

(Who Held the Pen, cont. from p. 1)

the wild, the irregular, genius of our daily criticism! What! are we to have miracles in sport? – Or, I speak reverently, does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?

Coleridge, who set a standard for sub-

---

**Levin and Evans took issue with Ogburn's citation of the famous quote by James and claimed that Ogburn had perpetuated an "injustice" against James by citing him as an anti-Stratfordian. Naturally this accusation prompted a reconsideration by anti-Stratfordians of what James' position actually was; it turns out that the Professors were as wrong about James as they were about most things pertaining to authorship. In a letter discovered by SOS newsletter editor Morse Johnson, James wrote to Ms. Hunt that Sir George Greenwood in *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* best expressed his views on the authorship question, and described Greenwood's book as "an extremely erudite, fair, and discriminating piece of work" (181).**

---

sequent Shakespearean criticism, points to the universal genius of the playwright:

Nature's... chosen poet, our own Shakespeare, himself a nature humanised, a genial understanding directing

self-consciously a power and implicit wisdom deeper than consciousness.

This remarkable summary suggests both the reason for the fascination concerning this writer and its importance. The famous words of Ben Jonson (from his dedicatory verse in the First Folio) succinctly express the phenomenon: "He was not of an age but for all time!" The insights encapsulated in such statements also inevitably provoke emotional reactions that threaten to cloud the search for clarity, for what Coleridge calls "divine truths". Yet perhaps a new angle on the mystery is already available.

In this article, I take a new look at the teachings of the Austrian philosopher, Goethe scholar, educationalist, artist and spiritual scientist Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925). Steiner began his career by editing Goethe's scientific works; as editor of a national journal, the *Magazin für Literatur*, Berlin (similar to the contemporary *Saturday Review*, London), he penned the editorials and theater reviews. After his fortieth year, he became an independent lecturer, to whom T.S. Eliot<sup>4</sup> pointed as the spiritual leader of our time. Steiner's four modern *Mystery Dramas* (1911-14) summarize his teaching. Steiner's grasp of world development could well be unique. It reaches beyond a "history of ideas" to describe spiritual movements or "impulses" and the part played in them by creative personalities.

Steiner spoke about Shakespeare on several occasions. I discuss one of his insights in the light of discoveries made since his day, especially the "Oxfordian" claims. Alone, the evidence of the Sonnets (1609) fits Edward de Vere (1550–1604), the Earl of Oxford, hand in glove. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* observes: "[I]n the twentieth century," apart from William of Stratford, Edward de Vere is "the strongest candidate proposed for the authorship of Shakespeare's plays." In this article, I do not attempt to solve all the riddles, neither survey the current state of the Oxfordian claims, nor pursue all of Steiner's revelations. However, I do suggest:

(1) Steiner may have left a specific insight concerning Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which links to the Oxfordian claim.

(2) If the recent scholarship



(discussed later) is correct—showing de Vere's Geneva Bible<sup>5</sup> was the Bard's, and why he led a hidden life as an author—then this result in turn may explain the form of Steiner's revelation.

### Shakespeare the Actor-Playwright

In his lectures, his chosen teaching method, Steiner complies with the conventional view of the authorship; when he uses the name "Shakespeare," he consistently means the actor as poet-playwright. He states this during a straightforward evening class in Berlin, 1902.<sup>6</sup> Speaking practically to stage artists in 1924, Steiner<sup>7</sup> again emphasizes the outstanding gifts of "the actor Shakespeare," mentioning his inside knowledge of down-to-earth tavern life. During a question time,<sup>8</sup> Steiner uses the phrase: "der Shakespeares Dramen verfaßt hat – he who wrote Shakespeare's dramas"; in another lecture<sup>9</sup> "der Dichter des «Hamlet» – the poet [who wrote] Hamlet." He sums up:<sup>10</sup> "Nothing human was alien to the genius who stood behind Shakespeare's plays and the characters in them." This helped him to portray the variety of human types and human life—a spiritual collaboration also seems indicated here. The playwright, Steiner continues, identified with his many characters; their joys and sorrows become his, yet he lets them express their own views. The literary critics, however, point to a deepening that occurred in mid-career, an analysis of tragedy and an eventual emergence beyond it, with which Steiner<sup>11</sup> also concurs:

Shakespeare draws on historical traditions... [he is] still dependent on others. Then... from about 1598 onwards a certain inner life... his own artistic imagination is awakened. He is able to give his characters the very inmost of his being. Then, when he has created Hamlet, a kind of bitterness towards the external physical world comes over him. We feel as though he were living in other worlds and judging the physical world differently... From this inner deepening of experience with all its inner tragedy we see him emerge again. First he has learned the external dramatic medium, then he

has gone through deepest inwardness (what I would call the meeting with the World-Spirit of which Goethe spoke so beautifully). Now he enters life once again with a certain humour, and his work carries in it the loftiest spirituality and the highest dramatic power—as, for example, in the *The Tempest*, one of the most wonderful creations of all humankind, one of the richest products of the evolution of dramatic art. Here, without allegory, Shakespeare is able in a living, human way to lay his ripe philosophy of life into every character and figure.

From a kind of "self-education" (Steiner continues), Shakespeare the writer rises to the highest spirituality, uniting science, art and religion as once

---

**Steiner may have left a specific insight concerning Shakespeare's Hamlet which links to the Oxfordian claim...If the recent scholarship (discussed later) is correct—showing de Vere's Geneva Bible was the Bard's, and why he led a hidden life as an author—then this result in turn explains the form of Steiner's revelation...**

---

prevailed in the early Mystery centres, which were the only centers of learning. In his deep spirituality, pointing to "exact clairvoyance" (Oxford English Dictionary: "exceptional insight"), Shakespeare stimulates "our spiritual nature, our own creative powers... [I]n his wonderful power he is modern as modern can be." The entirely "modern," supreme poet-dramatist re-attains the unity of cultural activity that once determined life in the ancient world. Whence does he draw the supreme motive power?

### Transformation of Personality

Steiner speaks of the inner source of Shakespeare's motive power in the remarkable 1912 lecture course on Mark's gospel. Here, the influence of the cosmic Christ in world history is sketched, that is, the long-term universal change, wrought by the Mystery of Golgotha—the term he uses of the Christ-event of death-resurrection seen in its significance for the race. In other lectures mentioning Shakespeare, Steiner<sup>12</sup> also speaks of "the tremendous transition" from the ancient to the modern world, which began in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the opening lecture of the cycle on Mark's gospel,<sup>13</sup> Steiner, always aiming to be concrete, names five figures who determined the cultural life of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: David, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe.

There lived then, more than anyone can imagine now, even in the most delicate stirrings of the soul, what we may call the feelings and truths of the Psalms; there [also] lived fundamentally what is to be found in Homer as well as what took such magnificent form in Dante; then, even if it did not live in Shakespeare himself, there was what is nevertheless so beautifully expressed by him in the form in which it now lives in men of modern times. Added to this is the striving of the human soul after truth which Goethe expressed in Faust, something that in reality lives in every human soul in such a way that it was often said, "Everyone who seeks the truth has something of the Faust-nature in him."

This passage deserves some discussion:

(1) "Feelings" and "truths" are mentioned and—considering all five writers—a cosmic, comprehensive, poet's world view is implied, even if expressed in five individual ways. The Psalms ("Praises") are religious lyrics, prayers that are songs, yet, in the words of Father Benson,<sup>14</sup> the whole Psalter is "a continuous epic" of Messiah's conflict and victory over evil. "Homer", writes the translator E.V. Rieu,<sup>15</sup>

(Continued on p. 26)

*Steiner, cont. from p. 25*

“invented drama before the theatre was invented to receive it.” Dante’s visionary *Divine Comedy*, we know, assumes epic proportions. In the light of the subsequent discussion, it is worth observing here that the five poet-singers are epic-dramatists, all serving the truth—noticeably, of self-transformation—as they perceived it, mainly through the word (the chants have been lost).

(2) We note that some scholars contest the authorship of three of the five artists. “King David,” rather like “King Arthur,” is more an office than a single individual. The Psalms were written by more than one individual, yet the unitary inspiration passed along a line of contributors to a completion. In the lecture, too, Steiner (like Rieu) makes light of the contested individuality of Homer. Connected to this point, the lecturer dismisses the minutiae concerning Goethe’s personality; to let this fall into oblivion would be “a good thing.”<sup>16</sup> Both the historical prototypes of the artistic works and the details of the artists’ earthly lives are minimized. We are to realize that the Mystery of Golgotha, registered in what C.G. Jung calls the Collective Unconscious, meant that “souls had to make a new beginning: Everything had to be transformed and altered so that great souls appeared small.” A new beginning is made. In short—as John Vyvyan<sup>17</sup> also shows—the love of power is to change to the power of love. Divine unconditional Love is to become divine-human. Clearly, the five poet-singers are mentioned for the significance of their creations. We note, too, as has also been pointed out before now,<sup>18</sup> the entire Shakespeare canon pursues in detail what Goethe’s Faust undergoes in a comprehensive single dramatic creation—the unfolding of tragedy and the overcoming of tragedy.

(3) The phrase qualifying Shakespeare’s contribution appears enigmatic. Steiner, as we saw, notes that Shakespeare “deepened his experience,” and yet he also seems to suggest the playwright was more an instrument for what entered his teeming imagination. Surely, we feel, a writer inwardly lives what he creates? The two aspects, however, cannot be disjunctive. It is precisely this dual aspect of creative activity itself that, as we saw, is recognized

by Coleridge. Moreover, in his graphic summary of Shakespeare’s psychic deepening, Ted Hughes<sup>19</sup> shows how the poet-playwright mirrors the deepest struggles of his age, in which in our century we, too, are emphatically involved.

(4) Finally in this passage, the search for “truth” is explicitly mentioned, concentrating in the individual. Epics, dramas, “the truth”—behind the whole story of the human word expressed through these five widely influential artist-creators, we

---

**in this passage, the search  
for “truth” is explicitly men-  
tioned, concentrating in the  
individual. Epics, dramas,  
“the truth”—behind the  
whole story of the human  
word expressed through  
these five widely influential  
artist-creators, we glimpse  
the cosmic Word, the logos.  
The meaning of this name  
is revealed in that chapter of  
the Bible which is second to  
none, John 17:17: “thy Word  
is truth.”**

---

glimpse the cosmic Word, the *logos*. The meaning of this name is revealed in that chapter of the Bible which is second to none, John 17:17: “thy Word is truth.”<sup>20</sup>

**Art as Truth**

In the same 1912 lecture, Steiner emphasises the fidelity of poetic creations. As products of the spirit, they more faithfully express the complete reality of human personality—the highest category we know—than do the reductions of scholar-critics of his acquaintance. Personality, Steiner argues, has undergone the most tremendous and far-reaching transforma-

tion from the ancient world to modern times. Two group-soul representatives of their people are named. Taking the great philosopher Empedocles (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.)—who taught the transmigration of souls—Steiner reveals that his inner striving comes to life again in Faust, “in the way Goethe portrays him.” The original figure lived in the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>-century. Then—the decisive revelation for the present inquiry—Steiner also links Hector of Troy, a personality notably sure of himself (portrayed in *The Iliad*), and Shakespeare’s Hamlet, “the doubter, the sceptic, the procrastinator”:

I cannot go into everything underlying the historical prototype of the poetical figure of Hamlet, but through the research of spiritual science, I can offer you a striking example of how a man, a spirit of ancient times, reappears<sup>21</sup> in the Christian era. The real figure underlying Hamlet, as presented by Shakespeare, is Hector. [Emphases added.]

The two historical prototypes are mentioned, yet the emphasis in both, indeed in three cases, falls on poetic creation: Homer’s Hector, Goethe’s Faust, and Shakespeare’s Hamlet. The Hector–Hamlet relationship is drawn from artistic portrayal which, Steiner is claiming, best portrays the human reality. The story of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Danish prince—on my reading—fades from view.

**A Self-Portrait?**

Steiner chooses *Hamlet*, perhaps the most discussed play of the canon. Here the authorship question becomes immediate. Hamlet himself, as nobody can mistake, exhibits a consciousness above all those in his environment, to the point of reflecting that environment in the “play-within-the-play.” Early in the play (1, 2), Hamlet declares, “I know not ‘seems.’” He strives for truth at all cost. In such a context, one might suppose Shakespeare, the man, speaks.

Oxfordians assert that a particular nobleman was the hidden author writing under the nom de plume “William Shakespeare.”<sup>22</sup> The “play-within-the-canon,”

reflecting the actual life and situation of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford and Lord Great Chamberlain, is Hamlet. (I am unaware of a claim made for any other personality.) It is argued that his flesh and blood contemporaries also correspond to the characters in this play: Queen Elizabeth as Gertrude; Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, as Claudius; William Cecil, Lord Burghley, as Polonius; Anne, Cecil's daughter and de Vere's first wife, as Ophelia, etc. The evidence is plausible. "Most convincing is the parallel between Lord Burghley, who, as Elizabeth's chief minister, was charged with maintaining the security of her realm, and Lord Polonius, who had the same position under the king of Denmark," John Michell<sup>23</sup> observes. "Oxford makes a convincing Hamlet—or vice versa... Comparisons between Anne Cecil and Ophelia are also reasonably close...."

If Steiner was as knowledgeable as the record of his whole, astonishing life's work attests, we might look to him for orientation. Does the Oxfordian contention contribute to our reading of the above-cited 1912 lecture? What precisely does Steiner mean by, "I cannot go into everything underlying the historical prototype of the poetical figure of Hamlet..."? In the cited lecture outlining the transforming power of "the Mystery of Golgotha," Hector and Hamlet are linked to, and by, the death-resurrection of the divine Word, Truth itself. If (as Oxfordians claim) Edward de Vere is the writer of *Hamlet*, then, from the perspective of posterity, could "the historical prototype" for Hamlet also correspond to the playwright himself?

### "Divine Truths"

If there is anything (i) in the discoveries made since Steiner's day, and (ii) in the above reasoning, the question may arise: Though Steiner mentions "the genius who stood behind Shakespeare's plays and the characters in them," why with his enlightened seership did he not reveal more details? For Steiner's perception, the "genius" in the background (see fn 24) was King James I—how, when and whom did he inspire, are tantalizing questions. Was only one of the Great Lord Chamberlain's players (Shakespeare) involved? Why is the

remarkable Great Lord Chamberlain (de Vere) himself unmentioned?

An observer might initially suggest (as Steiner himself remarks), that a mere substitution of authors' names in itself signifies precious little. Such a "solution" for Steiner would be no solution. Yet essential facts and the context, too, I suggest, may have been revealed by Steiner as an "open secret" already in 1912—in the best and only way he could. The literary and histori-

---

**An observer might initially suggest (as Steiner himself remarks), that a mere substitution of authors' names in itself signifies precious little. Such a "solution" for Steiner would be no solution. Yet essential facts and the context, too, I suggest, may have been revealed by Steiner as an "open secret" already in 1912—in the best and only way he could. The literary and historical detective work had to be left to others...**

---

cal detective work had to be left to others. The right time for a rational discussion, too, would arrive. In Steiner's day, the authorship question was hardly topical. Steiner dismissed the Baconians' claim<sup>24</sup> of his day as "utterly superficial." The claim for Edward de Vere was first made (1920) only towards the end of his extremely busy life.<sup>25</sup> With this whole enigma, we must also remember, literary questions were bound up with the political situation. With the completion of *Henry V*, writes John Masefield (1915),<sup>26</sup> Shakespeare "had done more than any English writer to make England sacred in the imagination of her sons." The playwright had more or less created the national myth! A hundred years ago,

the time was hardly ripe for direct revelation; today the British Empire is a faded glory. (Shakespeare's crowning greatness is that he also anticipated today's situation.) Moreover, the state of scholarship both of the times and of literature has advanced, providing much circumstantial evidence, and also offering answers to such disputes as dates of composition.

Let us return to the most important consideration of all, which, I think, could shed the most light on the whole riddle. It is axiomatic that for the most important realizations of self-knowledge—i.e., knowledge in relation to a self,<sup>27</sup> ultimately the Self—the connections have to be made by each seeker for him/herself. Is this not the key to the authorship claim? The real question of authorship touches something sacred. Who is prepared to investigate the very core of his/her humanity: "I am that I am"? These are Yahweh's words to Moses when asked to identify Himself (Ex 3:14), quoted in a blazing, indignant letter<sup>28</sup> of 1584 from de Vere to Lord Burghley, angrily rebuking Burghley for employing his own servants to spy on him, and they appear, too, in Sonnet 121:

Noe, I am that I am, and they that  
leuell  
At my abuses, reckon vp their owne[.]

Precisely in the lecture course on Mark's gospel, Steiner<sup>29</sup> claims that people "will have to learn to read the Bible in a completely new way." Not surprisingly, a powerful and perhaps supremely helpful light on the whole subject is offered by an in-depth PhD dissertation, *The Marginalia of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible*<sup>30</sup> with their direct relation to the poems and plays. Here it is not a mere matter of matching quotations from Bible and plays. With the new evidence, the reader should be better able to meet the Oxfordian claims, reasonably expecting to encounter the creative mind at work. We take a single example relating to *Hamlet* from Roger Stritmatter's study:

[Hamlet's] consciousness operates on a higher level of awareness than that of any other character in the drama.

(Steiner, cont. from p. 27)

When Claudius admits out loud “if thou knewest our purposes in sending thee to England,” Hamlet is three steps ahead of him: “I see a cherub,” he announces, “that sees them” (IV.3.50). Far from being insane, then, Hamlet represents the most developed manifestation of the deep Shakespearean archetype of the holy prophet. Like Feste or Touchstone, he speaks in riddles and enigmas. Unlike them, he is a Prince of the realm who is destined to inherit power and influence—if he survives.

The prophet belongs to the class of mythic character-types in Shakespeare. Indeed the plays, as Harold Goddard has apprehended, are a prolonged symphonic meditation on the dilemma of the artist/prophet confronted by brute force. Cordelia, Hamlet, Lucrece, Feste and many more, are characters whose knowledge of the unspeakable brings them into unavoidable conflict with the prevailing social norms of the world in which they live and make symbolic acts. They understand that “where force rules, truth must either undergo martyrdom, be silent, or speak a language its enemy cannot understand.”<sup>31</sup> These Shakespearean characters are nourished by the deep wellspring of their literary antecedents in Ovid and other sources. The author’s mythic paleo-symbols—Philomela, Orpheus, or even David—embody the quest for a language which can survive the disfiguring rituals imposed by political power and still communicate critical truths. They live in a world, like that of the marked Bible verse Hosea 9:7, in which political corruption and moral blindness decree that “the Prophet is a fool” and “the spiritual man is mad.”

(183)

Stritmatter’s dissertation (2001) also contains appendices on such technical matters as scientific tests on the handwriting, and a statistical investigation refuting charges of “randomness.” The all-important, crucial linguistic evidence he discusses in the body of the work reveals the annotator’s search for ethical support

as a hidden writer:<sup>32</sup>

Of the top eighty-one Shakespearean Bible verses identified in my SD list..., no fewer than five of them—I Samuel 16:7, Matthew 7:15, I Corinthians 6:19, II Corinthians 4:16-18 and II Corinthians 11:14—are variations of this neo-Platonic theme of the apprehension of a hidden, higher spiritual reality which can only be apprehended through “insight” which goes beyond mere physical perception.

Despite David Kathman’s dismissive internet article—some important Shakespeare Bible references, he observes, are not marked in de Vere’s Bible—the reader could believe he is led into the Bard’s

---

**The career of the  
dramatic poet  
“Shakespeare” shows  
precisely the artist’s  
dual struggle to make  
of life itself a work of  
art in the practice of  
his vocation....**

---

workshop; we seem to follow linguistic inspiration at work. Whatever we think on the authorship question, de Vere, apparently, regarded himself as a hidden author. The name “de Vere” means “truth”; the coat of arms carries the legend *Vero nihil Verius* —“Nothing Truer than the Truth” or “Nothing Truer than Vere” (probably created by de Vere during the 1570s).<sup>33</sup> The light shed especially by Stritmatter’s recent research lifts the whole authorship question beyond literary detective work—which nevertheless forms the essential basis—into a spiritual awareness. Now, at last, inner and outer research, biography and inspiration, can all meet.

**The Logic of Life**

The case appears to be unique.

Every life, of course, is unique. Consequently, objections on “logical” grounds could miss the point. It is easy to claim that a comparison of Steiner’s two examples (Empedocles–Faust; Hector–Hamlet), as also the alternative reading itself which I am suggesting, reveals logical discrepancies—*i.e.*, in the two “equations” representing the historical and literary personalities. Let us state the argument once more. The two examples of an earlier and a later incarnation stand side by side, similar yet different: (i) Empedocles becomes 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>-century Faust (perceived and expressed by Goethe); (ii) Hector (perceived and expressed by Homer) becomes Shakespeare’s Hamlet—the story in the Danish chronicles of Saxo Grammaticus (end of 12<sup>th</sup> century) via Belleforest and an earlier tragedy by Thomas Kyd,<sup>34</sup> taken over and transmuted. The result, a play showing how revenge leads to racial suicide (followed by *Measure for Measure*—“the resolution of *Hamlet*”),<sup>35</sup> at the same time becomes the vehicle for a certain self-revelation of the playwright.

The orthodox, “logical” reading of Steiner’s 1912 lecture, failing to differentiate the details of the authorship roles of Goethe and Shakespeare, could appear today as somewhat literal. On the other hand, my arguments may turn out to be a case of special pleading. What is essential, I concede, is not the possible connection of the playwright to Hector–Hamlet, but the indicated process of transformation. Whatever interesting questions on human life and creativity remain, a full inquiry has to include our own preconceptions—Coleridge, cited above, points out one widespread phenomenon. Then again, is Steiner taken rather literally, even uncritically? In his lecture, Steiner at any rate shows his habitual, fruitful attempt to raise thinking itself above mere concern for information and a satisfaction with generalisations. Life shows its own artistic logic, nowhere better perceived than in the works of the five cited authors. It is also worth noting that there is nothing automatic about repeated earth lives; in Steiner’s teaching, human beings incarnate again through the grace of the “Lord of Destiny.” In

order to do justice to the roots of artistic, human transformation, Steiner (as we saw) takes significant, concrete-artistic examples. The career of the dramatic poet “Shakespeare” shows precisely the artist’s dual struggle to make of life itself a work of art in the practice of his vocation — here, Steiner points out more than once, the transforming Christ-Impulse is significantly active.

## Conclusion

Rudolf Steiner spoke about Shakespeare for the most part as a man of the theater; his emphasis on character in the plays would be considered today as inadequate. Steiner refused to reduce Shakespeare’s art to a mere philosophy. With regard to “the authorship question,” he refused to discuss it on any but the highest creative and human level. Steiner showed no inclination to enter into the “superficial” debates of his day. Professing the orthodox view, he does not even mention Edward de Vere. As Ramsbotham<sup>36</sup> has shown, Steiner points to James I as the “inspirer.” For most of Steiner’s followers, there is no case to argue. The argument from silence, they rightly point out, is dangerous—or worse.

Nevertheless, questions still remain. Discoveries, too, have been made since Steiner’s day. And Steiner, after all, could also look ahead. Upon these premises the present paper has been written—roughly a hundred years on. Steiner saw the unitary inspiration in James (c.f. “David,”<sup>37</sup> and “Homer”); he must have regarded the question “Who held the pen?” as subsidiary. Were not others involved, as research suggests? Despite my critics, I submit that Steiner’s “silence” speaks louder than words. It is even possible Steiner may have left an essential clue with his revelation about Hamlet—attained “through spiritual science,” the method of tested seership he established.

(1) Steiner revealed that Hector was reborn as Hamlet. Homer’s Hector and Shakespeare’s Hamlet are linked; artistic creation, he stresses, faithfully portrays both the historical personalities and the profound impact of the Christ-event in the Collective Unconscious. Past action becomes present psychosis and search

for truth.

(2) Some historical and literary scholarship, especially of the last hundred years, claims that Shakespeare’s Hamlet, at the same time, points to a self-revelation of the Bard—Hamlet’s situation is a reflection of the playwright’s actual situation.

If, assuming the Oxfordian arguments, we bring points (1) and (2) together,

---

**“Shakespeare,” writes John Keats, “led a life of Allegory: his works are the comments on it.” Ted Hughes, another poet, has powerfully brought out the myth from Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, which provided the “tragic equation,” revealing that productive polarity which both mirrored the times and focussed the mature poet-dramatist. He points to the Renaissance Mysteries of “Hermetic Occult Neoplatonism...” Shakespeare the dramatist, Ramsbotham shows, trod the path of Christian initiation, which is the Higher Life in this life.**

---

could the complex personality who held the pen be Edward de Vere, possibly Hector of Troy<sup>38</sup> reborn?

My suggestion may appear to complicate an already involved enigma; further questions cannot be pursued in a single article. Perhaps three important corollaries, essential to appreciate why there is an authorship question at all, may point us further. If my suggestion contains any truth, we would have to say that Steiner:

(1) respected to the hilt the playwright’s self-chosen and also prescribed, hidden role, necessary during his lifetime to protect (i) his person in a troubled and violent age, and to keep the political situation stable, (ii) his creativity, and (iii), both then and subsequently, also the Mysteries;

2) anticipated the situation that historical and literary discoveries would sooner or later provide enough evidence for informed discussion;

(3) anticipated, too, the continuation of a fear and resistance to Mystery-wisdom that originally dictated the playwright’s need of secrecy.

In this contribution, I have not summarised the Oxfordian answer to the questions about dates—de Vere died in 1604; several of the greatest plays first appear after this date. Moreover, it seems early versions of some plays were performed before William came to London. Again, I have merely mentioned Steiner’s revelation about James I as the genius behind the playwright; the latter he defends as William Shakespeare, one of Oxford’s, later James’, troupe of actors. Historical research is rather baffled with both personalities (William and James). How indeed did this spiritual collaboration work? And how was the Hamlet situation transcended?

“Shakespeare,” writes John Keats,<sup>39</sup> “led a life of Allegory: his works are the comments on it.” Ted Hughes,<sup>40</sup> another poet, has powerfully brought out the myth from Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, which provided the “tragic equation,” revealing that productive polarity which both mirrored the times and focussed the mature poet-dramatist. He points to the Renaissance Mysteries of “Hermetic Occult Neoplatonism,” a subject made respectable by such scholars as Edgar Wind, Kathleen Raine and Frances Yates. Richard Ramsbotham<sup>41</sup> traces in the canon the Mystery element, particularly of death-resurrection, and penetrates to the archetypal drama of humanity, the Mystery of Golgotha. Shakespeare the dramatist, he shows, trod the path of Christian initiation, which is the Higher Life in this life.

Cerimon:

I hold it ever Virtue and cunning

(cont. on p. 30)

(Steiner cont. from p. 29)

were endowments greater  
Than nobleness and riches:  
careless heirs  
May the latter darken and expend;  
But immortality attends the former  
Making a man a god.

—*Pericles III.2*

John Vyvyan had already pointed to the essence of drama in the medieval Passion Plays. The supreme Mystery, depicted with complete consistency in the canon, is the transforming power of Love.<sup>42</sup> Hamlet has to throw out love (Ophelia) if he is to pursue revenge. The tragedy *Hamlet*, though not the final play in the canon, is, however, pivotal.

Almost the last words of Hamlet, speaking to Horatio, are (V.2.358-363):

O God! Horatio, what a wounded  
name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall  
live behind me.  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy  
breath in pain,  
To tell my story.

In the twenty-first century, the authorship question is no longer a “theory” or an “opinion,” but one of consciousness involving the search—in the Johannine and Coleridgean sense—for “divine truths.” The Mystery, as Paul declared,<sup>43</sup> summing up all lesser Mysteries — has been revealed. In other words, it is a matter of sight, of exact insight. Hamlet, in the “play-within-the-play” hoped, and momentarily succeeded, to “catch the conscience of the king”; the Bard himself, through the canon, hoped to awaken the conscience of humanity. Educationally, the whole range of “Shakespeare’s troubled kings”<sup>44</sup> portrays the Shakespearean ethic. Audience and readership are led into the duties of realising sovereign humanity—we are all “to become ourselves” in the practice of creative mercy.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> John Michell. *Who wrote Shakespeare?*

Thames and Hudson. London: New York 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Twain. *Is Shakespeare Dead?* New York & London, 1909, 143.

<sup>3</sup> S.T. Coleridge. ‘Shakespeare’s Judgment equal to his Genius’, Lectures, 1818, in *Coleridge: Poems and Prose*. Penguin Books. Harmondsworth, 1957, 240; also ‘Old’ Everyman, *Coleridge’s Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare...* Dent, London: Dutton, New York. ND. P. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Towards the end of his life, the poet, essayist and critic T.S. Eliot (1888–1965), on Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk (N.W. German Radio), 26 Dec. 1959, in the context of contrasting Goethe’s scientific consciousness and that employed in atomic research, said: “I see the path of progress for modern man in his occupation with his own self, with his inner being, as indicated by Rudolf Steiner.” From a longer citation in Colin Wilson. *Beyond the Occult*. Caxton Editions. London 2002. P. 335f.

<sup>5</sup> The Geneva version (1560, NT rev. 1576)—de Vere’s copy is of the second quarto 1568-70 edition — popularly referred to as the “Breeches Bible”; it preceded the Bishops’ Bible (1568, rev. 1569, 1572) and the authorised, King James version (1611).

<sup>6</sup> Rudolf Steiner. Berlin, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1902. GA 51. *Anthroposophic News Sheet*. Vol. 14 (1945). No. 9/10. March 4 (<rsrh-library@anth.org.uk>).

<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Steiner. *Speech and Drama* (GA 282). Lecture, Dornach. 18 December 1924. Rudolf Steiner Press (RSP). London 1986. (“GA” = Gesamtausgabe; list of Steiner’s Collected Works. German original pub. Dornach, Switzerland—Steiner’s working center. Complete works online: <http://rsv.arpa.ch/>)

<sup>8</sup> Rudolf Steiner. ‘Eine Fragenbeantwortung.’ Dornach. 10 April 1921. *Sprachgestaltung und Dramatische Kunst* (GA 282). Dornach, 1981, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Rudolf Steiner. Lecture Dornach 24 Feb. 1922 (GA 161).

<sup>10</sup> Rudolf Steiner. *Metamorphoses of the Soul*. Vol. 2 (GA 59). Lecture, Berlin, 12 May 1910. Rudolf Steiner Press (RSP). London 1983.

<sup>11</sup> Rudolf Steiner. Lecture, Stratford, 23 April 1922 (R. Steiner Library, London. Z.91).

<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Steiner. Lecture, Dornach, 22nd Feb., 1922.

<sup>13</sup> Rudolf Steiner. *The Gospel of St Mark* (GA 139). Lecture, Basel, 15 Sept. 1912. E.T. Anthroposophic Press. Hudson, New York: RSP 1986. Tr. rev. A.S.

<sup>14</sup> R.M. Benson. *The War-Songs of the Prince of Peace*. 2 vols. John Murry. London 1901. This translation and commentary occupies a class by itself.

<sup>15</sup> Homer. *The Iliad*. Tr. E.V. Rieu. Penguin Books. Harmondsworth 1950. P. xiii.

<sup>16</sup> C.f., R. Steiner. Lecture, Berlin 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1910 (GA 116); Paintings, like Leonardo’s *Last Supper*, will one day fall to dust, but the experience of “millions and millions” works on. And “just as the time came for Homer and is already for Shakespeare, so it will come for Goethe, too, that people will attempt to prove that an historical Goethe never existed.” (Tr. A.S.)

<sup>17</sup> See John Vyvyan. *The Shakespearean Ethic* (Chatto & Windus. London 1959; Barnes & Noble, New York); *Shakespeare and the Rose of Love* (London 1960; New York 1968); *Shakespeare and Platonic Beauty* (London 1961; New York 1970).

<sup>18</sup> See Edouard Schuré. *The Genesis of Tragedy*. Rudolf Steiner Pub. Co. London 1936; Charles Williams. *The English Poetic Mind*. OUP 1932; reissued Russell & Russell. New York 1963.

<sup>19</sup> Ted Hughes. ‘The Great Theme: Notes on Shakespeare’ (1971) in Ted Hughes, *Winter Pollen*. Faber & Faber. London & Boston, 1994, 103-121; impressively developed in Ted Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*. Faber & Faber. London & Boston 1992.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Gerald Stanley Lee. *The Shadow Christ*. New York, 1905, 74: “He has come to His sons not by hiding the human, but by calling the human forth and shining through it.” Lee’s little volume is “still worth its weight in gold” (J. Alexander Findlay, theologian. 1938).

<sup>21</sup> Steiner argues for the concept of metamorphosis applied to human life, in *Theosophy* (GA 9), 1908; RSP: London 1970. The Platonic concept of pre-existence may be more apparent in English literature, but reincarnation is widely held by philosophical and literary personalities. See Joseph Head & S.L. Cranston. *Reincarnation and World Thought*. Julian Press.

New York 1967.

<sup>22</sup> First claimed in 1920 by J. Thomas Looney, *"Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere...* 3rd annotated edition, ed. Ruth Loyd Miller. 2 vols. Kennikat Press, Port Washington, New York: London for Minos Pub. Co. Jennings, Louisiana 1975. See Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. EPM Pubs. McLean 1992; abridged version, Charlton Ogburn, *The Mystery of William Shakespeare*. Cardinal: Sphere Books. London: New York 1988; summarized in Charlton Ogburn, *The Man who was Shakespeare*. EPM Pubs. Inc. Delaplane, Virginia 1995.

<sup>23</sup> John Michell. *op. cit.*, 169.

<sup>24</sup> Rudolf Steiner. *Karmic Relationships*. Vol. 2 (GA236). Lecture 12 April 1924. RSP. London 1974. Here, Steiner concentrates on Francis Bacon (1561–1626). I submit that Steiner (i) uses the accepted name "Shakespeare" for the dramatic poet who wrote the canon; (ii) leaves the question "who held the pen?" untouched. Richard Ramsbotham, *Who Wrote Bacon?* (Temple Lodge, London 2004), who accepts the actor as the playwright, to my mind establishes that the reference to the inspirer, yet "lästiger Patron – intolerable fellow/patron," is James I (also seen by Friedrich Hiebel, *Das Drama des Dramas*. Dornach. 1984, 56-61). Ramsbotham clearly presents Steiner's main concern to depict the tremendous streams associated with Bacon and Shakespeare. At this level of seership there is nothing to contest. There is an antagonism, as Eliot already alludes (see fn 4), between a Baconian science that would torture nature's secrets from her, and a Shakespearean doctrine of self-transformation. Now, in Ramsbotham's view (letter to present writer), the suggestions in the present paper are quite untenable. However, his research question (concerning inspiration) and mine in this paper (who held the pen?), I suggest, overlap. For Ramsbotham 'knowledge' and 'inspiration' coincide. As I understand Steiner's revelation (12 April 1924, clarified by Ramsbotham), James I, at a profound rather than a personal level, inspired in particular four named personalities (two lived in Central Europe), one of whom was Shakespeare. The remarkable yet enigmatic James, then, is the "genius

standing behind" Shakespeare and his characters (see fn 9). Yet James did not hold their pens. Several questions—concerning dates, how inspiration works, why Steiner consistently made orthodox statements, and so on—merit further discussion.

<sup>25</sup> After reading Looney's discoveries, Sigmund Freud wrote to the author, "confessing... to be a follower of yours." "The man of Stratford... seems to have nothing at all to justify his claim, where Oxford has almost everything" (quoted in Ogburn, 1988, 120). The list of sympathizers has grown significantly in recent years.

<sup>26</sup> John Masefield. *William Shakespeare*. Heinemann. London 1915, 123.

<sup>27</sup> This phrase comes from an unjustly neglected work: Wilfrid Richmond, *An Essay on Personality as a Philosophical Principle*. Edwin Arnold. London 1900.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Stritmatter (2001), 145. "I pray, my lord, leave yt course, for I mean not to be yowre ward nor yowre chyld, I serve her magestie, and I am that I am, and by alliance neare to yowre lordship, but fre<e>, and scorne to be offred that iniurie, to thinke I am so weak of government as to be ruled by servants, or not able to governe myself."

<sup>29</sup> Rudolf Steiner. GA 139. Lecture 2, 16 Sept. 1912.

<sup>30</sup> Roger A. Stritmatter. *The Marginalia of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible: Providential Discovery, Literary Reasoning, and Historical Consequence*. University of Massachusetts, Amherst. February 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Harold C. Goddard. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press 1951, 61.

<sup>32</sup> Stritmatter thesis, *op. cit.*, chap. 12, 196f.

<sup>33</sup> Andrew Hannas points to Martial 7.76 as the probable source. Cited in Stritmatter, p. 231f.

<sup>34</sup> J.M. Robertson. *The Problem of Hamlet* (1919): Shakespeare performs "a miracle of transmutation, vitalizing, elevating, and irradiating a crude creation [Kyd's play] into a world's wonder..." (Quoted in Anne Bradby/Ridler (ed.). *Shakespeare Criticism* 1919-35. OUP 1936, 15).

<sup>35</sup> John Vyvyan, 1959, 6.

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> Even Jesus in the gospels claims "David" wrote Psalm 110: Matt 22:45, Mark 12:37, Luke 20:44. Scholars think otherwise.

Perhaps there is a "right" answer and a "correct" one?

<sup>38</sup> For another view, see Manfred Seyfert-Landgraf. Hector Berlioz and his Karmic Background. <rsh-library@anth.org.uk>

<sup>39</sup> Letter to George Keats: 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1819.

<sup>40</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>41</sup> Richard Ramsbotham, 'Shakespeare and World Destiny', *The Golden Blade* 1997. Floris Books. Edinburgh, 1996, 102-120.

<sup>42</sup> Shakespeare persistently proclaims—not as a philosopher but as a poet—that Love is redemptive power. Neither Church nor State believe it practicable, but Shakespeare resolves his tragedies on this assumption. J. Vyvyan (1960, 147, 151): Shakespeare "regularly shows the development of his characters to be a function of self-knowledge, or of self-discovery. And love and the self, as we have seen, are invariably linked and ultimately united... Shakespeare was not the first to link together love, pilgrimage and vision; it is his development of this association that is original... [L]ove must bear its cross of sacrifice if it will achieve its crown."

<sup>43</sup> Col 1:27; 2:2,3.

<sup>44</sup> See Adam Bittleston, 'Shakespeare's Troubled Kings' in *The Golden Blade* 1967. RSP London, 63-77.

#### (Letters, cont. from p. 2)

colony venturing via interrelated Peckham family tradition" (189). This information helps date the composition of the dedication to late 1601 or early 1602.

And so, I propose that the final "T" in the dedication, which brings the cipher properly to closure, stands for TIME and that the proper context in time is the key to understanding the sonnets themselves and both the overt and the hidden meaning of the dedication.

Charles F. Herberger, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Nasson College, Centerville, MA

#### Notes

Covey, Cyclone. *The Tragic Reign of Elizabeth I & Origin of English America* (2007).



Oxfordian stalwarts Bill and Charles Boyle at the recent New England Oxfordian dinner (see News, p. 4) From 1994-2003 Bill Boyle edited first, the *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, and then *Shakespeare Matters*. Charles Boyle, who has directed several outstanding Shakespearean productions, is the founder of the annual Boston Edward de Vere Birthday bash, which has met for years at the Harvard Faculty Club every April.

**“Looking back on that evening years ago I feel as if I had been witness to the beginnings of a literary landmark... Anyone who considers the Shakespeare controversy silly or a lot of old stuff is in for a particular surprise.”**

**—David McCullough, on Ogburn’s *Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 1984**

### **Inside this issue:**

*Who Held the Pen?.....1*

*The Mysterious Charlton Ogburn.....7*

*Fencing With Stanley Wells...7*

*Oxford in Taiwan.....21*

*Four Hundred Years of Stonewalling.....6*

## ***Shakespeare Matters***

***The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship***

**P.O. Box 65335**

**Baltimore, MD 21209**