



Shakespeare Matters

*"The Voice
of the
Shakespeare
Fellowship"*



Michael Cecil at the 2010 Ashland Authorship Conference reads his paper on the historical connections between his ancestor, William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley, and "Shakespeare."

William Cecil and Shakespeare: Revisiting the 1st Baron Burghley's "Precepts"

by Michael Cecil

Remarks delivered at The Ashland Authorship Conference
September 19, 2010

I am privileged to speak for a few minutes this morning. The question of who wrote the Shakespeare canon has been with me for some years. I am not a Shakespeare scholar, so my comments will be somewhat anecdotal.

In 2005 my wife and I stayed overnight in Stratford, England, and visited Holy Trinity Church there, where Will Shaksper is buried. We had looked around and were preparing to leave when the verger approached us. He no doubt noticed that our conversation was out of the ordinary. He looked around and saw that no one else was in the Church and then took us to the front of the building. He showed us two framed lists of people who

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Shakespeare's Sonnet 6 And the First Marked Passage in the de Vere Bible

by Richard M. Waugaman

Paula Blank, in her book *Shakespeare and the Mismeasure of Renaissance Man*,¹ explores Shakespeare's use of the "rhetoric of measurement" (2) as an ultimately ineffective way of assessing human worth. She repeatedly cites a Biblical verse that is quoted in the *Arte of English Poesie*² in the context of poetic proportion: "God made the world by number, measure, and weight" (42). This is the 17th verse of the 11th chapter of the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon. The chapter has two verse numbers that de Vere annotated in his Geneva Bible: 8 and 13. The word "sinneth" is also underlined in verse 13. Roger Stritmatter identified those two verses as constituting one of the most

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The Road to Oxford

by Graham Holderness

Nearly twenty years ago I launched, together with my colleague Bryan Loughrey, a series of Shakespeare Quarto texts under the title *Shakespearean Originals*. The texts were presented in an unusual way, and claims were made for them that seemed, at the time, quite radical. But they were essentially just the same old Quartos that everyone had known about since the 16th century.

A couple of journalists got the idea that these texts were hitherto unknown and newly discovered: moldy books dug up from Shakespeare's grave perhaps, or crumbling texts located by some Professor Robert Langdon in the Vatican archives. The consequent publicity was both extensive and embarrassing. I remember feeling, as I sat down in front of my Amstrad, ready to put the record straight, a distinct sense of impending deflation. After all, here beckoned celebrity, here was the clarion call of fame, here was Indiana Jones's "fortune and glory," just within my grasp. Did it matter that it was all based on inaccurate and unsustainable claims that we'd never even made? You just can't buy publicity like that.

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Letters

Editor's Note: The Following text is reprinted from a manuscript which arrived at *Shakespeare Matters* by snailmail, wrapped in a brown paper bag with a note attached, which read, in part: "The enclosed is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to persons living or deceased is purely a matter of your imagination. You should be ashamed of yourself for even thinking it...."

Not knowing what else to do with this oddity, other than perhaps follow the Elizabethan custom of lighting a pipe with it, your editor has elected on a whim to fill some otherwise empty pages of this publication. He indulges the fond expectation that the fable may amuse some and instruct others.

The Mouse and the Lion: Responses from an Orthodox Source

A fable by Anonymouse

Once upon a time there was a small grey mouse who lived in The Forest of Arden. She was pretty much of a nuisance, always getting under the feet of bigger, more important animals, and being bopped on the head, which did her brain no good at all.

Despite having been bopped once too often, which made her think that today was yesterday, yesterday was last week, and tomorrow would surely be Christmose—she was still a rather bookerly type of rodent, who read *Snakespeare Matters*, *The Foxfordian*, and *Brief Barnacles* cover to cover, as well as everything else she could lay her paws on. She loved travel literature, especially the tale of Bill Scratchter, a huge sea-faring rat, the size of a golden retriever, who wrote that he had been shipwrecked in a nearby pond, but hadn't deserted the sinking vessel until he could swim to shore. The brighter animals in the forest all thought that Scratchter's narrative must be the source of a play, *Beastwood Ho*, by that world-renowned Scottish terrier, Ben Mc-Jonson and his sidekick, Scrappy Chappy, but Mouse hadn't yet made up her mind. To be honest, she found it hard to make her mind up about anything these days,

even which cheese to choose for supper.

One day, while doing the cleaning, as tomorrow would be Christmose for the third time in a week, she came across a dog-eared copy of *Snakespeare Matters*, which contained an article by Dr. Frederick Titmouse that looked remarkably like what Scratchter had written. She checked the date of the newsletter. Why, it was the second of Frogtober, a whole month before Scratchter had said his shipwreck had taken place. Wow! Bill Scratchter must have been copying adventures that only Dr. Titmouse had experienced, the dirty rat. So Dr. Titmouse's article not Scratchter's, was the real source for *Beastward Ho*.

Who could she tell? Who would believe her? Her best friend was Snail, whom she especially liked because he was the only creature in the forest smaller than she was, and he didn't have any feet so she couldn't trip him up. He lived in his shell under a stone by the bluebells. She went to find him, very careful not to step on him while she told him what Scratchter had done.

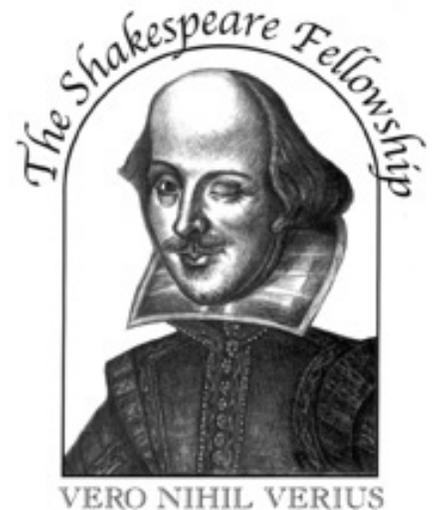
"What can you expect of a rat?" he asked. He adjusted his very tiny glasses over his even tinier nose. He looked exceedingly scholarly in a small sort of way.

"What are we going to do about

it?" asked Mouse in a tizzy. "We can't let Scratchter get away with such an appalling act. Why, he's become famous for other animals' doings!"

"Hm," said Snail. He tended to think long and carefully about matters, so Mouse nipped home to get some elderberry wine. Snail was still thinking when she returned. "Hm," he said finally, "I believe we should tell Lion. She's the Queen of the forest, after

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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).

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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.

The Road Not Taken.....

by Earl Showerman

We should all be grateful that Professor Graham Holderness has reached a point in his illustrious career where he can admit that there “may well be ‘reasonable doubt’ about Shakespeare” and that to “infer a biography” from the plays would more likely lead to the Earl of Oxford than to Nicholas Rowe’s Shakespeare whose life does not “necessarily quite match up with the works.”

However, in disclaiming any overarching significance of his comments at the “Rowe to Shapiro” forum at Shakespeare’s Globe, Holderness resorts to the same absolutes and exaggerated language so often employed by critics of authorship studies. His satirized scenario of simulated conversion as “a light flashed around me,” his self-comparison to St. Paul, and his professed discomfiture in the role of a “major Shakespeare scholar” of “considerable reputation and standing” are disingenuous.

Holderness is in fact a highly regarded scholar by all accounts. He is the general editor of *Critical Survey*, described by one reviewer as “a superb journal, fast becoming ‘required reading,’ especially for those interested in cutting-edge work in early modern studies.” He is also the author and editor of a number of acclaimed books, including *Shakespeare: The Histories*, *Cultural Shakespeare: Essays in the Shakespeare Myth*, *Textual Shakespeare: Writing and Word*, *Shakespeare: Out of Court: Dramatizations of Court Society*, *Politics of Theatre and Drama*, *Shakespeare’s History*, *Shakespeare Recycled*, *Visual Shakespeare: Essays in Film and Television*, and the soon to be released study in Anglo-Italian Renaissance studies, *Shakespeare and Venice*. To claim that “no-one ever called me ‘major’ or ‘foremost’” is to display the false modesty of superior disdain.

For someone who has made a career writing Shakespeare criticism, Holderness is clearly indulging hyperbolic deconstructionist denial when he claims that “he wouldn’t especially care” if the author were proven to be Edward de Vere, or “a wandering Kentish tinker, or Queen Elizabeth I, or the Pope.” Of course he cares, and the series of rhetorical questions Holderness poses about how much “reasonable doubt” and “historical evidence” and “how many conspiracy theories” we would have to swallow before considering alternative attributions, reflect the absolutism of orthodox thinking that blithely denies the myriad “lacunae”

in the traditional biography as they relate to the self-consciously literate canon.

While praising Nicholas Rowe’s 1709 biography of Shakespeare as “historically sourced, independently corroborated and not in itself improbable,” Holderness also freely admits that “it depicts a life of some deprivation that seems unlikely to have flourished into that of the world’s greatest dramatist.” However,



Holderness’ satirized scenario of simulated conversion as “a light flashed around me,” his self-comparison to St. Paul, and his professed discomfiture in the role of a “major Shakespeare scholar” of “considerable reputation and standing” are disingenuous. He is in fact a highly regarded scholar by all accounts. He is the general editor of *Critical Survey*, described by one reviewer as “a superb journal, fast becoming ‘required reading,’ especially for those interested in cutting-edge work in early modern studies.”



a few sentences later he contradicts himself by stating, without further elaboration, that “there is nothing in his (Rowe’s) account that should seem in any way improbable as a life of the author of the plays of William Shakespeare.” Holderness then goes on to accuse Oxfordians of “invariably” asserting that “only an aristocrat could have mastered such learning, acquired such favour and displayed such genius,” which is a complete misrepresentation of what authorship studies has proposed. No Oxfordian

Earl Showerman is the President of the Shakespeare Fellowship.

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

Stanley Wells —“On the Road” to Oxford?

Who would have suspected that Stanley Wells himself would be joining the Oxfordian cause? Ponder these quotations from his review of William Leahy’s *Shakespeare and his Authors* in the August 13, 2010, *Times Literary Supplement*. And this is Wells speaking for himself, not quoting Leahy — “there is no more evidence from his lifetime that the man from Stratford was an actor than that he was a playwright... In fact, there is no documentary evidence that Shakespeare went to school.” Well, yes, we already knew that— but welcome to the club, Professor Wells. We’ve been waiting for you.



This is Wells speaking for himself, not quoting Leahy— “there is no more evidence from his lifetime that the man from Stratford was an actor than that he was a playwright... In fact, there is no documentary evidence that Shakespeare went to school.”

Well, yes, we already knew that— but welcome to the club, Professor Wells.

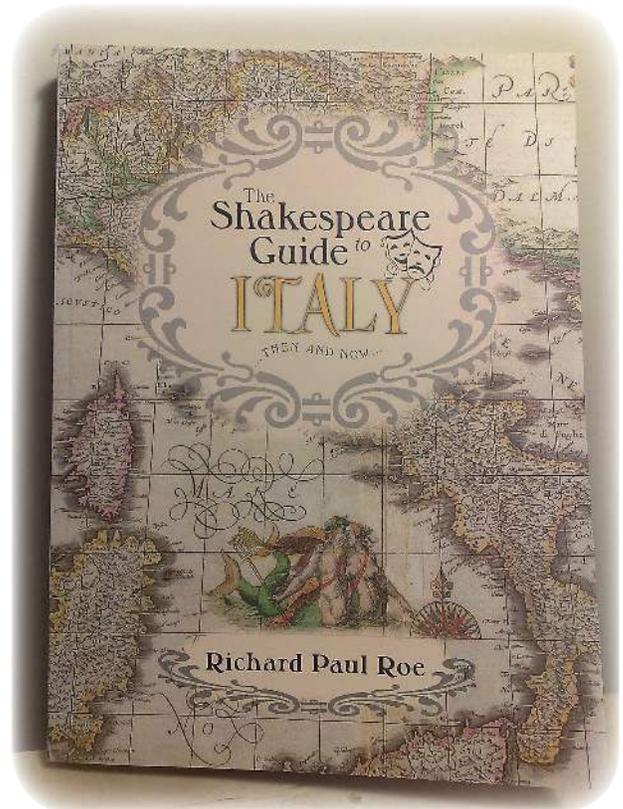


Richard Roe Passes

Richard Paul Roe died December 1, 2010, in Pasadena, California. He was a researcher, published author, and benefactor to the Oxfordian movement for more than a generation. The fruit of his 25 years of original research in Italy, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, will be published in autumn 2011 by HarperCollins in the United States. Of equal importance were Dick’s contributions to Oxfordian research and publishing efforts

in general, from underwriting the printing and distribution of the inaugural issue of *Brief Chronicles* to 1,000 English professors at US universities, becoming a major patron of *The Elizabethan Review* during its seven-year print history, donating \$300,000 to Concordia University’s Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre, to underwriting presenters at Oxfordian conferences. I include myself among the latter.

At his invitation I was his guest when the SOS annual conference was held in Pasadena, and I presented a paper on the Essex dialect in the plays. He kindly put me up in his stunning home, built on the edge of a canyon, where I was able to enjoy the company of this amazingly cheery fellow who had retired from the legal world after 30 years of practice. Richard loved the intellectual nature of the quest, had placed a long-term bet on the Italian component of the story, and was





Declaration Signers: from left to right, Keir Cutler, OSF Executive Director Paul Nicholson, OSF leading man James Newcomb, and Declaration coordinator John Shahan at the Ashland signing.

willing to invest money, time and labor for a full generation to see it through. He traveled to Italy more than half-a-dozen times, and hired Italian archivists as well as mapmakers, designers and photographers to ensure a comprehensive and accurate rendering of his research. That commitment was born of a tenacity tested in World War II, when Dick flew bombers out of Italy for the US Army Air Corps. On his return, he took his law degree and practiced in California, an effort which included the first shopping mall contract written in the state.

Dick presented his research at conferences as well, from the 1992 SOS conference in Cleveland, when he limned Oxford's travels in France in the spring of 1575, to describing the full extent of Oxford's Italian travels at the 2007 joint SOS-SF conference in Carmel, California. He thought himself lucky to have happened upon the authorship issue early enough to plan properly for his massive project after he took retirement. We are lucky enough to have been the recipients of his scholarship and generosity of spirit. RIP, Dick.

— Gary Goldstein

Declaration of Reasonable Doubt Garners new Celebrity Signers

When prominent theater professionals participated in a signing ceremony of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt About the Identity of William Shakespeare at the annual joint conference of the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society at the Ashland Springs Hotel in Ashland, Oregon in September.

The event featured Paul Nicholson, Executive Director of the prestigious Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), and James Newcomb, longtime OSF leading man. Both of them addressed the audience of well over 100 people about why they doubt that William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon wrote the works.

Nicholson, one of the most prominent Shakespeare festival directors in the United States, said "The Shakespeare authorship question is a great mystery, and I love great mysteries... I'm proud to have the opportunity to sign the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt."

In an interview last year reported in the annual *Prologue* magazine, which goes to 16,000 OSF members, Nicholson said, "Shakespeare simply didn't have the background... whereas Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, or some other high-ranking man or men — that makes sense."

Newcomb, now in his fourteenth season with the OSF, in addition to appearing at many other Shakespearean venues, said "the works themselves defy the story — the myth that the Stratford man was the author." (As the Declaration says, there's "an enormous gulf between the alleged author's life and the contents of his works.")

The other Declaration signers at the ceremony included Chris Coleman, Artistic Director, Portland Center Stage; Canadian actor and playwright Keir Cutler, PhD; Christopher DuVal, Assistant Professor of Performance, University of Idaho; Livia Genise, Artistic Director, Camelot Theatre, Ashland, Oregon; Felicia Londré, PhD, Professor of Theatre, University of Missouri at Kansas City; Stephen Moorer, Artistic Director, Pacific Repertory Theatre,

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(News, Cont. from p. 5)

Carmel, California; Mary Tooze, theater arts and library patron, Ashland, Oregon; and Hank Whittemore, award-winning actor, author and playwright.

Conference Chairman Earl Showerman, in presenting the beautifully-framed poster of the Declaration to Nicholson, said that, "While the academy remains prejudicial against any serious consideration of the Shakespeare authorship question, the theatre arts community has proven to be far more open-minded, and has demonstrated courage, leadership and creativity



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The Declaration of Reasonable Doubt is neutral about the true identity of the author. It argues that there is enough room for doubt that the question should now be regarded as a legitimate subject for research and publication in academia, and an appropriate topic for instruction and discussion in classrooms. The Declaration can be read and signed online at the website of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition.

The Declaration was first issued April 2007, in signing events at the Gef-

fen Playhouse in Los Angeles, CA, and at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, host of the annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference. Then, on September 8, 2007, famous actors Derek Jacobi and Mark Rylance held a signing event at the Chichester Festival Theatre in Chichester, West Sussex, following a performance of Rylance's play, *I Am Shakespeare*. The event coincided with the start of a master's degree program in authorship studies at Brunel University in West London. The combination gained worldwide media attention.

Over 1,820 people have now signed the Declaration, including 324 current and former academics. The largest number by academic discipline is those in English literature, followed by those in theater arts. A list of twenty prominent past doubters named in the Declaration includes Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William and Henry James, John Galsworthy, Sigmund Freud, Orson Welles, Sir John Gielgud, Charlie Chaplin, and U.S. Supreme Court Justices Harry A. Blackmun and Lewis F. Powell, Jr.

The list of Notable Declaration signatories at the SAC website includes such luminaries as former U.S. Supreme Court Justices John Paul Stevens and Sandra Day O'Connor, plus Shakespearean actors Sir Derek Jacobi, Mark Rylance, Jeremy Irons and Michael York. Paul Nicholson and James Newcomb will now be added, making a total of twenty-two.

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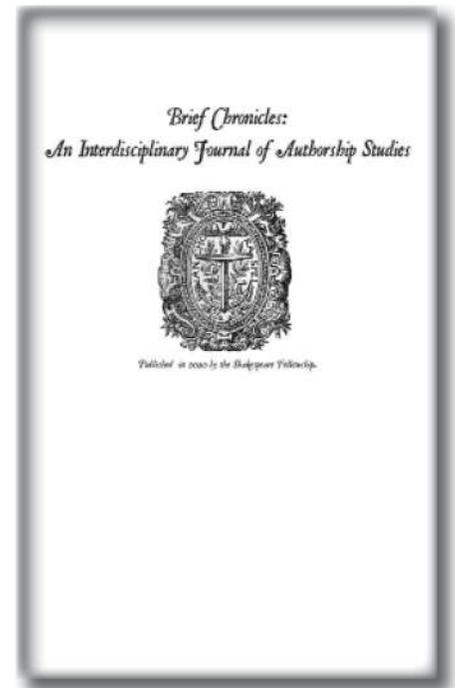
The second issue of *Brief Chronicles* has been published online at www.briefchronicles.com with ten papers and five book reviews from contributors in the US, Canada, England and Germany.

"That the inaugural issue was exceptional for its research," said Roger Stritmatter, general editor, "is shown by Gale Publishing's selection of Earl Showerman's paper on the Greek origins of *Much Ado About Nothing* for inclusion in its reference text, *Shakespeare Criticism*, due out in spring 2011.

"Highlights of the second issue include a paper that proposes a new au-

thorship candidate for *The Arte of English Poesie*, while a second defends the traditional authorship of *A Hundreth Sundry Flowers*, two Elizabethan books which have mesmerized literary historians for centuries." There is also a detailed response to Columbia University Professor James Shapiro's book, *Contested Will*, the first academic examination of the Shakespeare Authorship controversy since alternate candidates to the traditional Bard were originally proposed in the 1850s.

"In addition," said Gary Goldstein, managing editor, "we are publishing new research that provides evidence towards a



more accurate dating of *King Lear*'s composition using the play's topical allusions to eclipses of the sun and moon. Of equal import," he added, "is a proposed resolution of a longstanding myth regarding the office of Lord Great Chamberlain during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, which contains new archival discoveries."

Another paper investigates the peculiarities of Shakespeare's frontispiece engraving in the First Folio, the author, John Rollett, finding that "What is usually taken to be a poorly drawn portrait of the playwright turns out to be a skillfully executed depiction of a carefully designed

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Review of *Hamlet Himself* by Bronson Feldman

Bloomington, Indiana: iUniverse, 2010.

Reviewed by Richard M. Waugaman

Graham Bradshaw famously said “Hamlet can seem [to be] an actual person who somehow has been caught inside a play” (quoted by Bloom,¹ 401). Abraham Bronson Feldman’s book elucidates who this “actual person” is. Building on the work of Looney and other Oxfordians, Feldman (1914-1982) attempted to reconstruct in detail the events in Edward de Vere’s life that shaped this highly autobiographical play.

This book serves as a superb antidote to such toxically misleading works as Stephen Greenblatt’s *Will in the World*.² Where Greenblatt makes it up as he goes along in telling Shakespeare’s “story,” Feldman persuasively links *Hamlet* – both play and character – with a wealth of documented facts about de Vere’s life and emotional conflicts. Roughly a third of his 108 references are to manuscripts and to archival records of State Papers, a reflection of his painstaking scholarship. The publication of Feldman’s book is an encouraging sign of the growing acceptance of Looney’s 1920 Oxfordian authorship hypothesis.

Feldman’s book comes along at a propitious time, when the Oxfordian cause he did much to advance is rapidly gaining in credibility and support. Feldman became an Oxfordian in high school. He explored the subject when he began doubting the traditional theory. His younger brother (who, like Feldman, became an analyst) recalled reading Mark Twain’s anti-Stratfordian classic, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* aloud to him in high school. Twain evidently carried more authority for Feldman than did the Stratfordian establishment.

Abe Feldman earned a PhD in English literature from the University of Pennsylvania. He began publishing Oxfordian articles as early as 1947. Feldman’s career as an academic suffered as a result. After he invited Charles Wisner Barrell to lecture on Oxfordian theory at Temple University, his teaching contract there was not renewed. He then completed psychoanalytic training, and practiced psychoanalysis in Philadelphia. He also taught in the

history department of the Community College of Philadelphia.³

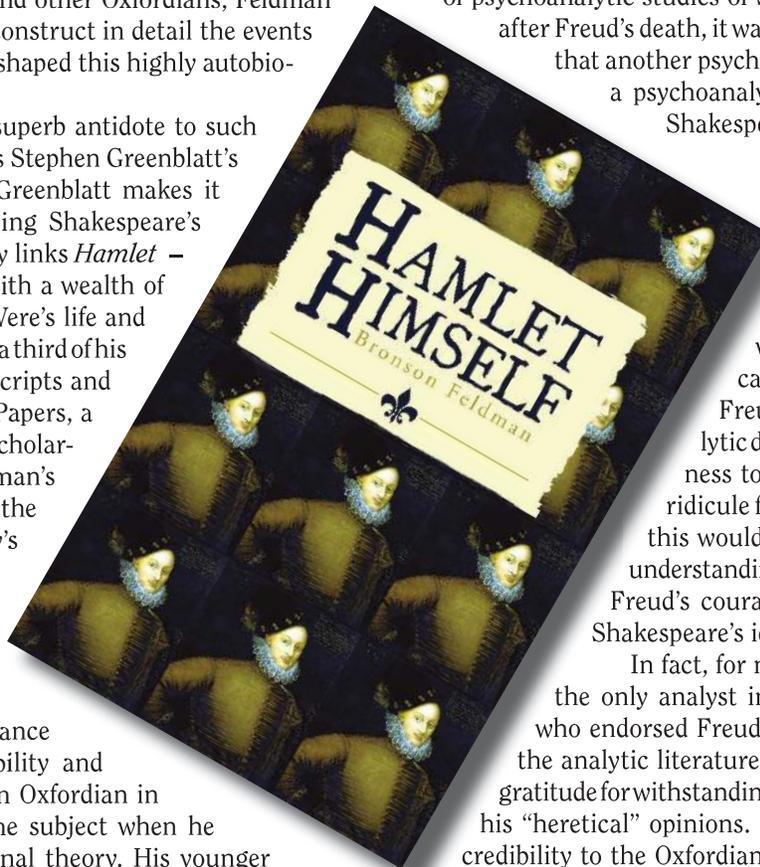
The *American Imago* published Feldman’s 1953 Oxfordian article, “The Confessions of William Shakespeare.”⁴ Its appearance marked a vitally important turning point in the history of psychoanalytic studies of Shakespeare. Appearing 14 years after Freud’s death, it was the first time (to my knowledge) that another psychoanalyst endorsed in the pages of a psychoanalytic journal Freud’s position on Shakespeare’s identity.

During his lifetime, despite his prestige as the founder of the psychoanalytic movement, Freud was unable to persuade a single follower to take up his suggestion that Shakespeare’s works be explored psychoanalytically from an Oxfordian perspective.⁵

Freud, who had made his psychoanalytic discoveries as a result of his willingness to withstand initial ostracism and ridicule for his unconventional idea, knew this would lead to a deeper psychoanalytic understanding of the works. Feldman emulated Freud’s courage in pursuing the truth about Shakespeare’s identity.

In fact, for nearly eighty years, Feldman was the only analyst in the U.S. of whom I am aware who endorsed Freud’s Oxfordian authorship views in the analytic literature.⁶ We all owe him a large debt of gratitude for withstanding enormous pressure to relinquish his “heretical” opinions. Freud’s stature lends significant credibility to the Oxfordian authorship claim. Stratfordians are well aware of this, and they have made repeated attempts to undermine the legitimacy of Freud’s opinions in this matter. Regrettably, psychoanalysts have used their professional skills not to deepen our understanding of the implications of de Vere’s authorship, but instead to “analyze” the ostensible psychopathology that led Freud astray about Shakespeare.

Feldman was the target of pressure not only from his original field of English literature, but also from his second profession of psychoanalysis. The earliest generation of psychoanalysts were self-selected as mavericks who were willing to devote themselves to a highly controversial profession. Over the years, however,



(*Hamlet Himself*, cont. from p. 7)

greater public acceptance of psychoanalysis eroded analysts' willingness to jeopardize their new status by challenging Shakespearean orthodoxy. In fact, it was Freud's translator (and former patient), James Strachey, who notoriously persuaded Freud that the acceptance of psychoanalysis in Britain might be placed at



Beres quoted Freud's unequivocal declaration in 1930, "I have... ceased to believe that the author of Shakespeare's works was the man from Stratford" (27). He then commented, in an astonishing non sequitur, "There is no need to enter into the controversy about the identity of Shakespeare." Why not? Since Beres believed a psychoanalytic understanding of literature is based on a deeper understanding of the author, how could he justify avoiding the crucial question of who Shakespeare was? Anticipating a central thesis of James Shapiro's *Contested Will*, Beres claimed that an artist like Shakespeare, rather than living through actual experiences, may instead "have lived through them in fantasy, either consciously or unconsciously."



risk if Freud insisted on publicizing his Oxfordian view. Feldman assumed (probably correctly) that Ernest Jones was behind this censorship. Over the years, analysts' fears of offending the English have morphed into undue fears of offending the English professors. Despite the lively interest among analysts in interdisciplinary studies, they seem to lack the confidence to challenge

the Stratfordian hegemony.

Feldman was up against analysts such as David Beres. Beres wrote an important article on the application of psychoanalysis to literary criticism that referred to Shakespeare repeatedly. He quoted Freud's unequivocal declaration in 1930, "I have... ceased to believe that the author of Shakespeare's works was the man from Stratford" (27).⁷ Beres then commented, in an astonishing non sequitur, "There is no need to enter into the controversy about the identity of Shakespeare" (27). Why not? Since Beres believed a psychoanalytic understanding of literature is based on a deeper understanding of the author, how could he justify avoiding the crucial question of who Shakespeare was? Anticipating a central thesis of James Shapiro's *Contested Will*, Beres claimed that an artist like Shakespeare, rather than living through actual experiences, may instead "have lived through them in fantasy, either consciously or unconsciously. There is a parallel here to Freud's early assumption that psychoneurosis was based on actual seduction in childhood and his later recognition that the child's fantasies and the ensuing conflict could be adequate aetiological factors" (29; emphasis added). If only Beres had known when he was writing in 1959 that many analysts now think Freud got the "seduction hypothesis" right the first time!

Beres cited the analyst Ernst Kris's crucial discovery that biographies of artists are often dominated by an implicit wish in the biographer to create a legend of "the social ascent from humble origins" (28). Literary scholars have mistakenly downplayed the significance of the artist's life, because of their misguided assumptions about Shakespeare's identity. Since de Vere was born into one of the most noble families in England and then suffered a severe decline in his fortune and personal reputation, he lends himself much more poorly to the legend of ascent from humble beginnings that Kris recurrently found in biographies of great artists.

Stratfordians rely heavily on projection in their feeble attempts to counter the now overwhelming evidence that de Vere wrote Shakespeare's works. That is, during those rare "ad rerum" moments when they are addressing the evidence at all, and not resorting to their usual *ad hominem* evasions of the facts. Notoriously, they claim de Vere's dates rule him out as the author. This claim ignores the fact that Shaksper of Stratford was born 14 years too late to have written the earlier versions of the plays. Some Stratfordian scholars (such as Harold Bloom and Eric Sams) have endorsed the theory that the so called *Ur-Hamlet* was written by Shakespeare. Some even conclude that the 1603 First Quarto of *Hamlet* may have originated in that earlier draft.

Feldman worked under the assumption that de Vere was in fact the author of each successive draft of *Hamlet*, beginning in the 1580s. Feldman read *Hamlet* as a roman à clef, and he offered many keys to unlock the secrets of the actual people who are depicted (and often lambasted) in it. For example, he viewed Claudius as a composite figure who alludes not only to de Vere's stepfather, but also to Robert Dudley, who won control of de Vere's inheritance when his father died.⁸ "It would not have been unreasonable for de Vere to have entertained the suspicion of foul play in the death of his father ...nor to have written a play about his suspicions, casting Dudley in the role of the usurper, King

Claudius" (65). Such a formulation is consistent with Feldman's emphasis on de Vere having "converted the death of Hamlet's father from butchery done in the open at a feast [in his sources] to a crafty assassination in solitude" (67).

Feldman believed Charles Tyrrell lies behind some of de Vere's other characters. Tyrrell was de Vere's mother's second husband. De Vere "once remarked to a drinking companion that his mother's second husband had visited him in the figure of a ghost" (12). Feldman speculated that, in addition to contributing to Claudius, Tyrrell shows up as well in the character of Sir James Tyrrel, who murdered the boy prince Edward in *Richard III*. Feldman naturally agreed with the many 19th century Shakespeare scholars who identified Polonius as Lord Burghley—and he further postulated that less conscious hostility toward de Vere's father also contributed to this characterization.

What did Feldman bring from psychoanalysis to his reading of *Hamlet*? Most significantly, he believed that knowing the identity of its author matters, in contrast with traditional Stratfordians who, when confronted with incontrovertible evidence against their man, ask "What difference does it make who the author was?" The identity of the author matters a great deal, because psychoanalysts' cumulative clinical experience fully vindicates Freud's theory of psychic determinism. That is, every human action, thought, feeling, and creative endeavor is influenced by a range of conscious and unconscious psychological conflicts, based on that individual's unique life experiences, fantasies, and ways of coping with core neurotic conflicts.

Feldman decisively rejected the usual Stratfordian claim that Shakespeare's native genius alone was the wellspring of his creativity. Sadly, this set him apart from nearly every analyst who has written on Shakespeare since Freud. Even the most brilliant analysts share the Stratfordian blind spot when it comes to thinking about the author of Shakespeare's works, as they fall victim to the false dichotomy that claims those who want to correlate an author's work with his life experiences are thereby denying the role of the imagination. Feldman plausibly characterized de Vere as exhibiting a high degree of narcissism. For example, in his 1953 exploration of the Sonnets, he posited that de Vere was narcissistically identified with Southampton, the Fair Youth. The magnitude of de Vere's narcissism is also implicit in his identifying his alter ego Hamlet with Christ (see below).

Feldman analyzed Hamlet's "play within the play" just as Freud analyzed the dream within a dream—as belying an unconscious wish to disavow the realistic nature of the content that is thus doubly framed. I am skeptical, however, about Feldman's further contention that "It does not matter, the author seems to protest... I am innocent of the wickedness which the whole play appears to disclose" (109). Wanting to one-up de Vere with our depth psychological theories is an occupational hazard for all psychoanalysts. But here I feel sympathetic with Harold Bloom's retort that Shakespeare himself discovered the unconscious first, long before Freud. Feldman admitted himself to be "puzzled by the name Hamlet gives his play" (110). But in 1974, John Doeblner pointed out that the "Mousetrap" alludes in its whimsical title to St. Augustine's sermon that describes Christ on the cross as a "mousetrap" to catch the Devil.⁹ This trope suggests that human

souls are the provender the mouse-devil is after, before getting diverted into God's trap. Hamlet's use of St. Augustine's metaphor places Hamlet in a God-like role, using the "Mousetrap" play to ensnare the devilish Claudius before he can do further damage to Hamlet, Gertrude, and the state of Denmark. Further, Hamlet is thereby externalizing onto Claudius his own vexed relationship with the Ghost. That is, if Protestants are correct and there is no Purgatory, then the Ghost was likely to be not the soul of



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Hamlet's father, but instead a devil in disguise, trying to "trap" Hamlet into committing the sin of murdering the possibly innocent Claudius.

For all that is timeless in Freud's discoveries about the dynamic unconscious, some psychoanalytic theories (like some literary theories) are vulnerable to faddish trends that have the timelessness of a Roman candle. Reading Feldman's book reminded me of a past era of analytic writing, when libido theory became a hammer that turned much of human experience into so many nails to be beaten down decisively by the overly confi-

(Continued on p. 10)

(*Hamlet*, cont. from p. 9)

dent analyst. There is certainly an element of truth in many of these formulations, but analysts are at risk of losing credibility with scholars in other fields with conclusions such as Feldman's "More urethral than genital, [de Vere's] maleness could delight in its reveries and day-delusions only for brief intervals" (127).



Feldman devoted so much attention to de Vere's many alleged character flaws that he was aware some of his readers might conclude he was focussed more on de Vere's psychopathology than on his genius. He implied that there is no real dichotomy between these two endeavors, because de Vere wrote his final version of *Hamlet* "as if with the deliberate intention to portray the malady of his soul, to understand himself," meaning that Feldman respected de Vere's unparalleled self-scrutiny in exploring the depths of his tortured mind. One of de Vere's strengths of character on which Feldman placed special emphasis was his gift for using wit to cope with life's most profound challenges — "To my view, the humor of Hamlet, more than his passion or intellect or anything else, is the factor that turns his tragedy into the author's autobiography."



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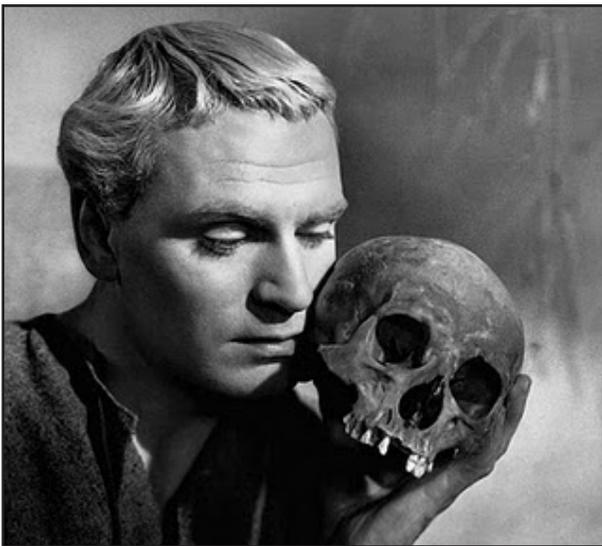
Feldman took on the controversial topic of de Vere's sexuality. On this issue, many Oxfordians agree with Stratfordians in assuming the author, whoever he was, was purely heterosexual. So the Sonnets are read as non-autobiographical, unless they are interpreted according to the Tudor-son theory as addressed to de Vere's ostensible son, the Earl of Southampton. As I explain in detail elsewhere,¹⁰ my reading of the Sonnets leads me to assume that de Vere was bisexual. Feldman accepted B.M. Ward's conjecture that Barnabe Rich's 1581 description of a certain "very womanly" London "gentlewoman" was a caricature of de Vere. Feldman speculated of de Vere's effeminate clothing, "Evidently it did not occur to [de Vere] that one purpose of all this display might be the allurements of handsome men" (122). Feldman admitted that the only direct evidence we have of de Vere's homosexual behavior came from his enemies. Feldman was writing at a time when most psychoanalysts considered homosexuality to be *prima facie* evidence of psychopathology. So Feldman implied that de Vere's "experiments with homosexuality" (123; or bisexuality, more accurately) were yet another symptom of his "derangement" (129). Feldman cogently imagined that de Vere's childhood "love and dread" (129) of his impulse-ridden father led him to defend against oedipal wishes for his mother by identifying with his mother as his father's sexual object, only to encounter his father's disapproval of any open effeminacy.

Although analysts no longer regard homosexuality as an illness, many of Feldman's comments about de Vere's conflicts over his homosexual wishes strike me as plausible. Feldman speculated, for example, that in de Vere's sexual encounters with males, "he probably confined himself to play the dominant male" (123).¹¹ This hypothesis (although impossible to prove) is consistent with a line in Sonnet 20, asserting that Nature defeated the poet, "By adding one thing to my purpose nothing," namely, the Fair Youth's "prick." Defenders of Shakespeare's heterosexual bona fides always seize on this passage to argue that it proves conclusively that Shakespeare was not gay or bisexual.¹² Feldman's more specific formulation, however, leaves open the possibility that de Vere was saying he would only be a "top," not a "bottom" (or "pathic"¹³) in a homosexual encounter with the Fair Youth. His unwillingness to be a recipient of homosexual intercourse might have reflected the dynamic Feldman described—a fear of his father's condemnation of excessive femininity.

Hamlet's famous final words are "the rest is silence" (V.ii.358). Is there any hint of conflicts about gender orientation here? This question might appear odd, but a proverbial expression in the early modern era was "The ornament of a woman is silence."¹⁴ Consistent with some of Feldman's ideas, we might speculate that Hamlet's struggle against suicide includes his unconsciously equating life with his capacity to ward off his feminine identifications; and death with his surrender to them.

Earlier in the final scene, Hamlet dismisses his doubts about having agreed to the fencing match with Laertes by saying those doubts are merely such misgivings “as would perhaps trouble a woman” (V.ii.216). That is, he bolsters his resolve to fight Laertes by repudiating fears that he regards as shamefully feminine.

Feldman joined the many scholars who emphasize religious imagery in *Hamlet*. Hamlet “adores prayer.” “Shakespeare identified [Hamlet] with Jesus Christ,” and “Hamlet conceives of himself as a born savior” (all on 116). Feldman cited the description by one of de Vere’s servants that he was “indued with special piety” (117). Feldman sees in de Vere’s identification with God a reflection of his fantasy of fusion with his parents, based on the mechanism of oral incorporation. However, I am skeptical of Feldman’s assertion that, in de Vere’s final revision of *Hamlet*, de Vere “relinquished his former religious explanations,” becoming instead “a disciple of the Greek skeptics” (93). The assumption that de Vere settled on any final definitive view of life’s most profound questions may project onto him our own intolerance of ambiguity, which de Vere was uniquely capable of tolerating.



As evidence that de Vere was still struggling with (if not resolving) religious questions, the final lines of *Hamlet* may contain some allusions to John Calvin’s conception of the sacrament of the Lord’s “supper” (or Holy Communion). After Horatio promises to answer Fortinbras’s question about death’s “feast” that requires so many dead bodies, Horatio adds, somewhat gratuitously, “all this can I/ Truly deliver” (V.ii.385–86). Five of the earliest six uses of “truly deliver” included in EEBO are in one book—a 1561 translation of Calvin’s *The Institution of Christian Religion*.¹⁵ Calvin wrote, for example, “in the mysterie of the Supper... Christ is truely delivered to us: namely that first we should growe together into one body with hym” (123). Similarly, Calvin wrote of the mystery of eating Christ’s flesh in the Lord’s Supper, “I nothing dout that bothe he [Christ] dothe truely deliver them” [i.e., his body and blood] (134).

De Vere’s extraordinarily associative mind seemed to retain virtually everything he had ever read. His writings are therefore

brimming with literary allusions, whether deliberate or inadvertent. De Vere may not have intended it consciously, but there is an apparent allusion in Horatio’s words to the gist of the above passages from Calvin. Fortinbras himself seems to allude to the Holy Communion in his reference to the preparation of a “feast” with the several corpses lying before him. He thus reinforces the similar allusion in Horatio’s “truly delivered.”

In yet another passage in Calvin’s book, he wrote that “God... dothe not therfore shew himselfe mercyfull unto them, for that he havynge truely delivered them from death, dothe recyve them to his savegarde, but onely he discloseth to them a present mercie. But he vouchesaveth to graunt to the only electe the lively roote of fayth” (114). The previous paragraph includes the word “election” once, and “the electe” four times. Recall that the dying Hamlet said “But I do prophesy th’ election lights/ On Fortinbras” (V.ii.355–56). In the context of the subsequent references to death’s “feast” and “truly deliver,” one can construe Hamlet’s words as implying that he is taking a God-like role in determining who will be among the “elect,” and not just favoring Fortinbras as the next king of Denmark.

Feldman’s book on *Hamlet* deserves a wide readership. His friends who had it republished deserve our deepest thanks. I hope it will encourage the many people who love *Hamlet* to investigate the Oxfordian authorship hypothesis. And if Feldman’s example spurs other psychoanalysts to become “Oxfreudians,” so much the better.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998).
- ² (New York: Norton, 2005.)
- ³ I am grateful to Dr. Anita Schmukler for providing information on Feldman’s life and career.
- ⁴ *American Imago* 10:113–165, 1953.
- ⁵ Feldman stated that the early analyst Ruth Mack Brunswick was an Oxfordian, but she did not commit herself to these views in print (2).
- ⁶ Or who received a friendly reception from analytic journals. From personal experience, I know this is no simple matter. One analytic editor wrote to me just after he received my Oxfordian manuscript, “I have to tell you as a scholar that I consider the ‘anti-Stratfordian’ argument to be comparable to a belief in UFOs...” He was just getting warmed up. A week later, he wrote, “It is out of the question that I could accept your flight of fancy... I have to tell you in all sincerity that you are in the grip of a delusional belief...I could go on, but I think I’ve said enough for you to see where I am coming from. I am sorry if I seem harsh, and I would treat all this very differently if I were responding as a clinician and not as a scholar. But you are asking me to take this seriously, and I have to tell you it’s hogwash.” (My article was enthusiastically accepted a month later by another psychoanalytic journal.)
- ⁷ “The Contribution of Psychoanalysis to the Biography of the Artist.” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 40(1959):26–37.
- ⁸ Nina Green, “The Fall of the house of Oxford.” *Brief Chronicles I* (2009):49–122.
- ⁹ *Shakespeare’s Speaking Pictures: Studies in Iconic Imagery*. (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1974).

(Continued on p. 31)

A Contest of Wills:

Reviewing Shapiro's Reviewers

by Bonner Miller Cutting

As I was reading and later reflecting on James Shapiro's *Contested Will*, the words of A. A. Milne's poem "Lines and Squares" came to mind. For those not steeped in children's poetry, this charming allegory issues a warning. You must watch where you walk, for if you step on a line, you will be eaten by the masses of bears "who wait at the corners all ready to eat the sillies who tread on the lines of the street." For those



How did this scheme of things come about in the first place? Shapiro takes a stab at an answer by tracing the history of the controversy, and in doing so he inadvertently provides the information in his book that delivers a heavy blow to the cause he is defending. Most of Shapiro's reviewers have reiterated his position that for about 200 years, nobody doubted the Stratford story! The reviewers think that this concept of early acceptance buttresses the orthodox position. But the doubts did not surface immediately because the material facts of the life of William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon had not yet been unearthed! The apotheosis of the man from Stratford was a fait accompli....



who doubt the traditional attribution of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon, this gentle warning is eerily well directed. Questioning Shakespearean authorship is walking "on the lines," and one who ventures forth to explore this subject does so at his or her own peril. James Shapiro is the biggest bear ever to



James Shapiro: The "biggest bear ever to weigh in on the authorship question on behalf of the orthodox establishment."

weigh in on the authorship question on behalf of the orthodox establishment, and the doubters receive a carefully calibrated grinding between his teeth.

Contested Will has been, quite predictably, well received by most reviewers, each trying to outdo the other with superlatives, thereby giving the orthodox establishment the right to assert that this book merits "critical acclaim." Of course there is nothing remotely "critical" going on in these tidy reviews, so, as usual, it is the lot of the Shakespeare Doubters to evaluate Shapiro's arguments.

Shapiro opens with a crucial acknowledgement: This subject has been one that the world of academia strictly avoids. Those of us who have studied this controversial issue are well aware of the academic taboo, but it is a stunning admission coming from Shapiro – and worth a momentary pause.

The taboo serves a number of useful functions: first, it deprives teachers and students of a venue for discussion; second, it keeps a substantial body of contradictory information off the table so that it will not be taken into consideration; and third, and most important of all, new research is systematically discouraged if it has the potential to conflict with the established point of view. Thus it's easy for academics to maintain their ascendancy. They can just say no. And they do.

But it begs the question: How did this scheme of things come about in the first place? Shapiro takes a stab at an answer by tracing the history of the controversy, and in doing so he inadvertently provides the information in his book that delivers a heavy blow to the cause he is defending. Most of Shapiro's reviewers have

reiterated his position that for about 200 years, nobody doubted the Stratford story! This is true, more or less, and the reviewers think that this concept of early acceptance buttresses the orthodox position. But what



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One might wonder why it took
so long.**



is not taken into account is that the doubts did not surface immediately because the facts of the life of William Shaksper of Stratford-upon-Avon had not yet been unearthed! The apotheosis of the man from Stratford was a *fait accompli* – and

he became the focal point for the cultural identity of the English people – before the documentary record was investigated.

This can be easily confirmed with a quick check of the facts and dates provided by Shapiro (with minor inaccuracies) in the opening chapter of his book. He reports that by 1728 Shakespeare was regarded as “divine,” but notes that the “belated efforts of eighteenth-century scholars and collectors” did not turn up biographical documentation that supported a career as a writer.

It’s a little like President Bush leading the country into war in Iraq. The basis of this decision – and Congress bought off on it nearly unanimously – was that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. A decision of mammoth import was made prior to actually having the hard evidence in hand. The WMDs were not found, yet the commitment to Iraq remained.

By the mid-1700s, the search was underway for the WMDs (William’s Manuscripts and Documents) that would substantiate Shakespeare’s supposed literary activity. By this time, more than a century had passed since his death in 1616. As noted by the eminent 20th century historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, armies of “formidably equipped” scholars ransacked the 16th and early 17th century records and archives for anything that might contain even a mention of Shakespeare’s name. When all that was coming up was documentation of the life of a country businessman – and Shapiro dutifully reports the dates of these discoveries in his book -- it was painfully apparent that this paper chase had failed to locate any WMDs. It’s not surprising that by the early 19th century, doubts about the story started to percolate to the surface. One might wonder why it took so long.

In one of the strengths of his book, Shapiro presents a fine explication of the cultural forces that led to a skeptical mentality in the 19th century and posits that this attitude spilled over to the authorship question. Be that as it may, it’s not cultural factors but the weakness of the documentary evidence for the Stratford man’s case that led to the emergence of doubts after approximately 200 years had gone by. But the appealing story of the Stratford mythos had been established, and though created out of whole cloth, it was

firmly entrenched in academia as well as in the hearts of the general public. Thus the commitment to the story remained.

It is an ongoing phenomenon that people outside of academia – unkindly characterized as “amateurs” by the professors in the ivy – have stepped up to the plate to study the evidence and do the research that has shed much light on this intriguing quest for the truth. This has occurred in the face of powerful opposition from



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Shapiro is troubled that “doubters” of high repute have joined the fray. The list of distinguished people who have doubted the traditional story is growing in spite of the opprobrium that will surely come their way. Just to name a few: Mark Twain, Sigmund Freud, Sir John Gielgud, Sir

(Contest cont. from p. 13)

Derek Jacobi, Mark Rylance, several U.S. Supreme Court Justices — after a while it starts to add up.

In tracing the Doubters back to their origins in Delia Bacon, Twain, Freud and others, Shapiro makes liberal use of *ad hominem* attacks. But he turns his verbal artillery up a notch to shoot down someone who is not a household name. John Thomas Looney (rhymes with Sony) was



In his younger days, Looney was an adherent of the philosophy of the French mathematician Auguste Comte. Comte's theory of Logical Positivism was a response to the social decimation and injustice left in the wake of the French Revolution. Comte died in obscurity in 1857, but the complex Comtean philosophy appealed to the Victorian mindset, and various Englishmen including John Stuart Mill and later John Thomas Looney, were drawn to it.



a schoolteacher by profession. Though possessed of an unassuming and modest manner, Looney is described by the Dean of St. Paul's as "one of the clearest thinkers and the most effective exponent of the true art of teaching" he had ever known. Looney was intrigued, as others before him had been, by the problems and contradictions in the biography of the Stratford man as the author of the Shakespeare Canon.

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adherent of the philosophy of the French mathematician Auguste Comte. Comte's theory of Logical Positivism was a response to the social decimation and injustice left in the wake of the French Revolution. Comte died in obscurity in 1857, but the complex Comtean philosophy appealed to the Victorian mindset, and various Englishmen including John Stuart Mill and later John Thomas Looney, were drawn to it. By the early 20th century, it had run its course. Subsequently, Looney began his research on Shakespeare that led to his book *Shakespeare Identified*. Shapiro could stop right here.

But at this point, Shapiro kicks up his rhetoric to the next level. With the help of free association and a touch of time traveling, he draws a tenuous line from Comte, circa 1850, to Hitler, circa 1940; and along the way he subtly creates the impression that Looney (whose work fell in between these dates) was a Nazi sympathizer. It's a low blow even for Shapiro. He is clearly following Stephen Greenblatt's lead in attempting to equate authorship doubters with holocaust deniers. In an effort to turn this distorted reasoning into a New Paradigm, others clamor on board. Katherine Duncan-Jones comments in her review of *Contested Will* in *The Literary Times*: "It seems that Freud never fully understood the Positivist ideology to which Looney had been committed, which had strong strands within it both of fascism and anti-Semitism." One might ask what Shapiro and his admirers understand about Comte, Looney, or Freud.

While I was reading the Duncan-Jones review, as well as the various ones that have appeared in many major newspapers and journals, bits and pieces of Milne's poem would, again, run through my mind, unbidden. Images surfaced of the "little bears growling to each other" in eager anticipation of eating "the sillies who step on the lines." As the little bears – oops – the reviewers revel in the feigned civility that Shapiro assumes, my mind turned to the bigger bears who "try to pretend they came round the corner to look for a friend." Shapiro is congratulated for his "polite, sympathetic scrutiny" and his commitment "to treating all sides fairly." Shapiro is doing nothing of the sort. He's

just a bigger bear, and his only commitment is to squelch what he regards as the doubting nonsense. And he is well feted and well paid for it.

With all these vigorous assists, Shapiro's book may succeed in propping up the fragile party line. Even so, the sun occasionally breaks through the clouds of smoke. In *The Brooklyn Rail*, William S. Niederkorn gives an in-depth review of the hodgepodge of misleading statements and outright dishonest claims that fill the pages of Shapiro's book. Reassuringly, Niederkorn's review was chosen the



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"Review of the Day" by the *National Book Critics Circle*.

In the *Wall Street Journal*, Saul Rosenberg breaks ranks with the fawning crowd in pointing out that there are difficulties inherent in Shapiro's scenario of an author browsing, observing and chatting his way along the path to *Hamlet*, *Lear* and *Othello*. Although his review is complimentary overall, he finds this proposal of "Shakespeare" casually gathering and assimilating highly esoteric information a bit unlikely. Well, yes.

But for the most part, Shapiro's screed

(Continued on p. 30)

(Sonnet 6, cont. from p. 1)

prominent leitmotifs in Shakespeare's works: the balance between God's wrath and his mercy. De Vere famously used the phrase "remembrance of things past" from Chapter 11 in Sonnet 30. In addition, de Vere underlined six verse numbers in the following chapter.

The context of Wisdom 11:17 is that God could potentially use his limitless powers to invent novel punishments for the wicked; but instead God shows mercy and love to all his creatures, and he therefore relies on the natural laws he has created, including "measure, number, and weight." So these tropes take on deep theological import, as they teach us how God tempers justice with mercy.

Blank notes of the procreation Sonnets, "The rhetorical terms of this desired 'increase' are, often enough, mathematical" (46). She then discusses the trope of numbers in Sonnet 6. "The young man... must multiply himself by 'ten times'... Anticipating the gains the young man will accrue through sexual 'use' of 'usury,' the poet hopes for a profit margin of 'ten for one'... The young man's children will 'refigure' their father... by 'multiplying' him (Shakespeare's repetition of the word 'ten' five times in [three] lines adds to the conceit of multiplication)" (47; my emphasis).

I maintain that there is an echo here of a passage in Genesis, that happens to be the very first passage that Edward de Vere marked in his Geneva Bible. To my knowledge, this Biblical echo has been hitherto unnoticed (Biblical allusions in the Sonnets have received much less attention than have such allusions in the plays). De Vere underlined the verse number of Genesis 18:26 — "And the Lord answered, If I finde in Sodom fifty righteous within the citie, then will I spare all the place for their sakes." Once again, this marked verse speaks of how God balances his wrath against the sinful with his mercy toward them.

The reader may be skeptical at this point. I want to clarify that I am unsure how many of de Vere's early readers (including the Earl of Southampton) would have been conscious of the echo of Genesis 18 in Sonnet 6. But I strongly agree with Robert Alter³ that "in general it is likely

that a good deal of [literary] allusion is either meant to have or ends up having a subliminal effect" (121). We can extract the number 50 from the Sonnet, but only by adding up the five repetitions of the



God has told Abraham of his plan to destroy Sodom "because their sinne is exceeding grievous" (Genesis 18:20). Abraham talks back to God, appealing to God's sense of justice and mercy. Alter⁴ describes Abraham here as "surprisingly audacious in the cause of justice, a stance that could scarcely have been predicted from the obedient and pious Abraham of the preceding episodes." Abraham begins by asking if God will still destroy Sodom, if there are fifty righteous men in the city. God replies to Abraham's plea (in the verse de Vere marked), agreeing that he will in fact spare the city for the sake of the hypothetical fifty righteous men.



number 10. However, let us examine the context of Genesis 18:26.

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Thus, this narrative begins with 50 people, then gradually moves downward in five intervals to 10. It is my contention that these explicit references to numbers and to multiples of ten are echoed in Sonnet 6, where they begin as a trope for usury. Unlike the downward numerical course of Genesis 18, in Sonnet 6 we encounter a sort of mirror image of measurement, starting with the number ten, and arriving at higher numbers of people. The second and third quatrains read

That use is not forbidden usury,
Which happies those that pay the willing lone;
That's for thy selfe to breed an other thee,
Or ten times happier be it ten for one,
Ten times thy selfe were happier then thou art, If
ten of thine ten times refigur'd thee,
Then what could death doe if thou should'st depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?

For the moment, I wish to focus attention on the five repetitions of the number ten that Blank noted. I argue that our mind will play with these numbers in various subliminal ways. One way of reckoning them will in fact be through addition: 10+10+10+10+10. This will yield the number 50, which is the number men-

(Continued on p. 16)

(Sonnet 6, cont. from p. 15)

tioned in the underlined verse.

Let me now back up by three chapters in Genesis. Genesis 15 tells the story of God's promise to the still childless Abraham to make him the forefather of a nearly infinite number of offspring. Numerical tropes run throughout this and the next three chapters. For example, God said



De Vere did not mark any of these passages from Genesis 15-17. But I contend that the context of the marked verse is significant. We know that de Vere did not mark in his Geneva Bible every passage that influenced his literary works. So we need not insist that a passage be annotated to argue for its influence on the works. I find Genesis 18:26 to be especially significant. The more we examine its broad context, the greater its relevance to Sonnet 6.

Sonnet 6.



"Loke up now unto heaven, and tel the starres, if thou be able to nombre them: and he said unto him, So shal thy sede be. And Abram beleved the Lord, and he counted that to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15: 5-6). In Genesis 17 God promises, "And I wil make my covenant betwene me and thee, and I wil multiply thee exceedingly... Also I wil make thee exceedingly fruteful, and will make naccions of thee: yea, Kings shal procede of thee" (verses 2, 6).⁵

De Vere did not mark any of these passages from Genesis 15-17. But I contend that the context of the marked verse is

significant. We know that de Vere did not mark in his Geneva Bible every passage that influenced his literary works. So we need not insist that a passage be annotated to argue for its influence on the works. I find Genesis 18: 26 to be especially significant. The more we examine its broad context, the greater its relevance to Sonnet 6.

Sonnet 6 is one of the first 17 Sonnets, that ostensibly all aim to persuade the Fair Youth to marry and have children. They are known, in fact, as the Procreation Sonnets. The Youth, like Abraham, is now childless. I would argue that the implicit allusion to the marked section of Genesis hints that childlessness, like usury, is sinful. Just as "forbidden usury" can be eschewed if one is careful to offer assistance only to "those that pay the willing lone," the correct way to avoid the sinfulness of childlessness is to procreate. God will then be merciful toward the Youth. And the Youth's righteousness can then be measured by numbers. The greater the number of his progeny, the more blessed he will be.

The poet, in Sonnet 6, may implicitly compare himself to God, measuring the Youth's degree of sinfulness, and promising that the Youth will be "exceedingly fruteful" in his descendants, possibly even that he will have Kings as descendants.⁶ This latter promise depends on a covenant between the two men. We might speculate about this possibly subliminal implication of Sonnet 6, once seen in its Biblical context. One obvious reference would be to the marriage covenant that de Vere is ostensibly seeking between the Earl of Southampton and de Vere's daughter Elizabeth, whom Lord Burghley was ordering Southampton to marry.⁷ De Vere himself may have gone along with Lord Burghley's scheme in a perfunctory way. Patrick Murphy⁸ argues cogently that one subtext of *Venus and Adonis* is a sort of covert legal brief, giving Southampton some possible legal grounds for refusing this match, without having to pay the 5,000 pound fine he is said to have incurred. If Murphy is correct, we have reason to doubt de Vere's enthusiasm for the proposed match between his daughter and Southampton.

Genesis 18 was read on Trinity Sunday in de Vere's day. The three members of the Trinity constituted one of

the most significant numerical images of Elizabethan Christianity. We should not underestimate how powerfully this religious image influenced early modern



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thought. Typological readings of the Old Testament were at the heart of Christian theology, finding predictions of the coming of Christ throughout this text. The Geneva Bible's annotations for Genesis 18

provide a clue as to why this chapter was read on Trinity Sunday. The three men of verse 2 are glossed as three angels, or spirits. "The Lord" of verse 17 is glossed as "Jehovah the Ebrewe worde, which we call Lord, sheweth that this Angel was Christ" (marginal note "h"). The Geneva annotators thus found the members of the Trinity in and between the lines of this chapter. Current commentators continue to see Christ prefigured in these passages. Abraham himself plays what could be seen as a Christ-like role, interceding between God and sinful man, obtaining God's forgiveness and mercy on behalf of man.

We know that de Vere was bold enough to play God when he quoted God's words "I am that I am" of Exodus 3:14 in a letter and in Sonnet 121. I suggest that de Vere, at least unconsciously, compared himself and Southampton to God and Abraham, respectively, in Sonnet 6. In this reading, de Vere promises Southampton that, if he will agree to the proposed covenant, he will "multiply exceedingly" because he will have found favor in de Vere's eyes. The Biblical echo implies promises of untold magnitude to Southampton. The 12th line of Sonnet 6 promises a form of immortality to Southampton: "Leaving thee living in posterity." God's covenant with Abraham follows many of the conventions of non-Biblical covenants of Abraham's era. De Vere's promise of immortality to Southampton echoes a covenantal tradition of which de Vere may have been aware — "In covenantal terminology, the aspirant to a vassal throne was made to 'live' if the great king established him on the throne, particularly when he had been 'killed,' i.e., rejected in his claim by rivals."⁹ Southampton might thus become a second Abraham, to so many descendants he will found a new nation. Might he also start a new religion, on the model of Abraham? Is his covenant to be a sort of Second Covenant? These possible implications of the Biblical echo are stunning (if blasphemous) praise indeed, since they would compare Southampton with Christ.

De Vere's annotations in his Geneva Bible, first studied by Roger Stritmatter,¹⁰ are a rich source for Shakespeare studies. Sonnet 6 echoes at least two more

recurrently annotated themes from the Geneva Bible. Verses referring to "usury" are frequently marked, and the word itself



Numbers in general strongly attracted de Vere's interest as he read his Geneva Bible. For example, I Samuel, the "the most heavily annotated book in the de Vere Bible," has 18 different numbers among its marked verses. II Samuel has 14 numbers among its marked verses. I Samuel 13:5 gives us a glimpse of de Vere's special interest in numbers. Note the relatively few words he underlined in this verse: "The Philistims also gathered them selves together to fight with Israel, thirtie thousand charets and six thousand horsemen: for the people was like the sand which is by the seas side in multitude, and came up, and pitched in Michmash Eastewarde from Beth-aven." Notice how de Vere zeroes in on the one phrase that contains numbers, and underlines only it.



is one of the few that were left written in the margin when half an inch of the book's

fore-edge was cropped as it was rebound. Sonnet 6 not only mentions usury explicitly.¹¹ It also alludes to the fact that charging interest, previously banned in England, was legalized in 1571, on condition that the borrower freely agreed to the terms, and on condition that the interest rate not exceed "one for ten," or ten percent. Sonnet 6 reverses these terms in speaking of "ten for one," then continues to multiply by ten, arriving at 100 (or 1,000 or 10,000, or 100,000, depending on how many of the 10's we multiply).

Numbers in general strongly attracted de Vere's interest as he read his Geneva Bible. For example, I Samuel, which Stritmatter identifies as "the most heavily annotated book in the de Vere Bible" (356), has 18 different numbers among its marked verses. II Samuel has 14 numbers among its marked verses. I Samuel 13:5 gives us a glimpse of de Vere's special interest in numbers. Note the relatively few words he underlined in this verse: "The Philistims also gathered them selves together to fight with Israel, thirtie thousand charets and six thousand horsemen: for the people was like the sand which is by the seas side in multitude, and came up, and pitched in Michmash Eastewarde from Beth-aven." Notice how de Vere zeroes in on the one phrase that contains numbers, and underlines only it. I Kings 8: 63 is even more noteworthy: "And Solomon offred a sacrifice of peace offrings which he offred unto the Lord, to wit, two and twentie thousand beeves, and a hundreth and twentie thousand shepe: so the King and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord." In this case, de Vere did more than just selectively underline the phrase with the numbers. He also wrote in the margin, "Oxen 22000; shepe 1220000 [sic]." (Ironically, for all his interest in numbers, he inserts an extra "2" in the second numeral, perhaps influenced by the "22" in the number of oxen, making the second number inaccurate.)

I argue that Sonnet 6's echo of Genesis 18 also makes the latter's allusions to the sins of Sodom another relevant Biblical word. A high proportion of de Vere's marked verses in the Old Testament refer to sin, and many others refer to related words such as iniquity; wickedness; evil

(Continued on p. 18)

(Sonnet 6, cont. from p. 17)

ways; transgression; and filthiness. As with so many of de Vere's marked verses, this word "sin" also appears written out in the margin several times, as a sort of keyword (sometimes part of the word was cropped off by the nefarious binder).

What about Sodom? Does it play any possible role in the Biblical echoes of Sonnet 6? I suspect it does.¹² I find it difficult to believe that de Vere waited patiently to see if Southampton would agree to marry Elizabeth Vere, and only then developed his own erotic passion for Southampton. The OED cites the use of "sodomy" meaning sexual intercourse between males as far back as the 13th century; it gives Gabriel Harvey in 1593 as introducing the word to refer to "an act or instance of this." So I assume that the notorious sins of Sodom were very much on de Vere's mind when he read about them in Genesis 18 and when he marked verse 26, a verse that offers reassurance that sins related to Sodom may be forgiven. The phrase "Sodom apple" appears in print in the early 17th century.

I hope I have convinced you that further riches for the explication of Shakespeare's works lie undiscovered in de Vere's Geneva Bible. Especially now that an excellent facsimile of the 1560 edition¹³ is inexpensively available, I recommend that Oxfordians obtain one, then transcribe de Vere's annotations as I did, with Stritmatter's book as a guide for marking verses and for marginal comments.

Endnotes

¹ Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.

² I join those who speculate Edward de Vere wrote this anonymous book.

³ In *The Pleasures of Reading*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

⁴ In *The Five Books of Moses*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.

⁵ Naseeb Shaheen in his *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Plays* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1999) notes an echo of these words in Henry VIII 5.4.51-52: "His honor and the greatness of his name/ Shall be, and make new nations" (493).

⁶ Similarly, Steven Marx, in his *Shake-*

peare and the Bible (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) writes of the plays that "the God of the Bible is actually present in Shakespeare, only disguised as a man or woman" (10).

⁷ Some further speculations—In Genesis, Abraham's obligation in the covenant is to circumcise himself and all his family and offspring. In the trope of synecdochy, the part stands for the whole. Indirectly, then, the covenant



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might allude to a form of submission, in which one gives one's penis to the other man. I believe this hidden meaning is relevant, because I take the unpopular position that the later Sonnets reflect a consummated love affair between de Vere and Southampton. Thus, I believe that de Vere already, in Sonnet 6, was interested in Southampton's penis on his own behalf, as well as his daughter's.

⁸ "Wriosthley's resistance: Wardship practices and Ovidian narrative in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*." In Philip C. Kolin (ed.), *Venus and Adonis: Critical Essays*. New York: Garland, 1997, 323-40.

⁹ *The New Bible Commentary Revised*, D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer (eds.), Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1970 (97).

¹⁰ *The Marginalia of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible: Providential Discovery, Literary Reasoning, and Historical Consequence*. Northampton, MA: Oxenford Press, 2003.

¹¹ In his *Shakespeare's Perfume: Sodomy and Sublimity in the Sonnets, Wilde, Freud, and Lacan* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, Richard Halpern notes that "Sonnet 6 repeats Sonnet 4's contrast between procreative 'use' of semen and 'forbidden usury'" (20).

¹² Halpern (2002) argues that "the procreation sonnets employ a range of figures that mimic, and in some cases may derive from, theological condemnations of sodomy" (20).

¹³ *The Geneva Bible: 1560 Edition*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007.

(Road to Oxford, cont. from p. 1)

So I proceeded to set out the banal truth, that there is nothing new under the sun. I'm not aware that it did me any good, though I certainly learned that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. So what to do when another opportunity for fame, another shot at fortune and glory, presents itself? I was informed by various internet sources* that during the "Rowe to Shapiro" conference at Shakespeare's Globe, a light flashed around me, and I fell to the ground, and blurted out that the true author of Shakespeare's plays was: Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford.

Headlines can't lie: "Holderness: Shakespeare's biography is that of the earl of Oxford," blogs Roger Stritmatter. And here is Julia Cleave of the Shakespearean Authorship Trust:

From an Oxfordian point of view, most startling of all was the declaration made by Professor Graham Holderness, Hertfordshire University. In the middle of a discussion regarding the questionable facticity of tales of

(Road to Oxford, cont. from p. 18)

deer-poaching, calf-killing and horse-holding, he stated baldly – without further comment:

If you were to construct a biography which ticked all the boxes – if you were to read Shakespeare's plays and infer a biography from it – it wouldn't be Rowe's, it would actually be the Earl of Oxford's.

Clearly the earth moved for some-



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body. The comments flow thick and fast: “The very foundation of Stratfordian biography is on the verge of breaking apart.” The center cannot hold. “The quote from Holderness is a swinging gate through which Oxfordians ought to immediately drive their full coach and horses.”

* For the record, that however clever 20-20 hindsight may be, Professor Holderness was accurately quoted, as has been verified by at least two independent observers.

One of the great things about conversion narratives is that your pre-conversion life gets revised until it precisely parallels your new one. St Paul was never so zealous a persecutor of Christians as he appeared, retrospectively, to be, after he had become one himself. In the same way, it wasn't until I blindly stumbled upon the road to Oxford that I became quite so definitively “a major Shakespearean scholar” of “considerable reputation and standing”: indeed “one of the foremost “orthodox” Shakespeare scholars in the world.”

Now before I was suspected of falling out of the Oxfordian closet, no one ever called me “major” or “foremost,” and certainly not “orthodox.” I sort of like it in a way. Could I have this all the time, I think to myself, if I just keep dropping suggestive pericopes into the conversation? Could I really retain this reputation as “one of the foremost orthodox Shakespeare scholars in the world,” if I just occasionally blurted out mysterious soundbites on the Shakespeare Authorship Question: “I’m an Oxford man, you know”; or “I’m only here for de Vere.”

Tempting as it is, I’m going to have to pass. My eyesight is a lot better now, and though in my temporary visual impairment things might have appeared brighter, much more shiny and new, the hard gray light of another common day gives light enough to read the truth by:

“My name is Graham Holderness, and my position on the Shakespeare Authorship Question is that I am interested in reasonable doubt, but not in alternative certainty.”

I don't think Edward de Vere wrote Shakespeare's plays and poems. I wouldn't especially care if he did, or if the real author was proven to be a wandering Kentish tinker, or Queen Elizabeth I, or the Pope. I don't have any strong personal investment in “the Stratfordian hypothesis,” but it does seem to me a reasonable one. Of course there are lacunae, and doubts and questions about “the man from Stratford” (who is not in these circles permitted even to enjoy his own name). But they are nothing compared with the lacunae and doubts and questions that would apply to

any other candidature. There may well be “reasonable doubt” about Shakespeare. But how much reasonable doubt would one have to countenance to explain that someone else wrote those works? How much historical evidence would we have to dispel, how many conspiracy theories would we have to swallow?

Nicholas Rowe's 1709 biography of Shakespeare, whose tercentenary was celebrated at the Globe conference, depicts Shakespeare as a young man from a



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peasant farming and agricultural trading background; who received little formal education; worked in his father's business; got into trouble with a local landowner by poaching deer from his estate; fled from Stratford, and turned up outside a theater in London seeking work as a “servitude.” Rowe's biography has been widely regarded as inaccurate and fanciful, but recent scholarship has offered to revise this view, demonstrating that Rowe's narrative is historically sourced, independently

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(Road to Oxford, cont. from p. 19)

corroborated and not in itself improbable.

Of course this raises issues for Stratfordians, since it depicts a life of some deprivation that seems unlikely to have flourished into that of the world's greatest dramatist. Biographers of Shakespeare have looked for better explanations, scenarios that put the author of the plays into an environment of literacy and learning, and provide him with access to the cultural and entertainment industries, to the worlds of aristocratic patronage and court favour.

Anti-Stratfordians would rather believe Rowe, since it is their contention that the subject of his biography could not possibly have been the man who wrote the works: *quod erat demonstrandum*. The more authentic and credible Rowe becomes, the less likely it is that this Stratford man is the true author.

I think, with René Weis and the late Eric Sams, that Rowe should be trusted. His historical sources were sound and verifiable; his claims are corroborated by other early traditions; and most importantly, there is nothing in his account that should seem in any way improbable as a life of the author of the plays of William Shakespeare. A young man from a trading family in a provincial town, who acquired there a rich and varied education in both life and learning, who worked in his father's business, ran wild and got into trouble, left home and entered the theater as a menial, became an actor and then a writer. None of that seems



Dr. Holderness and colleague, at the 2009 "Queen and Country" Symposium at the Globe in London. The Symposium is an ongoing international collaboration to study the "forms of communication and negotiation of power in Elizabethan and Jacobean England."

incredible to me. To assert, as Oxfordians invariably assert, that only an aristocrat could have mastered such learning, acquired such favor and displayed such genius is surely to underestimate the lower orders, and to overestimate the upper class. Let's list on our fingers all the great writers produced by the British hereditary aristocracy....all right, then, just use one hand.

Now it is true that the facts of the Shakespeare life as depicted in Rowe do not necessarily quite match up with the works. It would be very odd if they did, since the works are dramatic poems in which every word is spoken by a character on stage, and no space



Insofar as Shakespeare Authorship inquiry is interested in pursuing these profound questions about life and writing, the self and identity, personal expression and impersonal artistry (and I know that some authorship doubters are interested in such matters), then there is common ground for debate. Insofar as such inquiries are obsessively concerned to lobby for alternative candidates, and to discredit "the man from Stratford," there really won't be all that much to talk about.



at all is provided for confessional material (would the same were true of modern literature). Even the Sonnets are not as clearly autobiographical as they have often been received. But for me the problem lies deeper than this. In this blogging, twittering world we have lost all sense of any relationship between the self and writing that does not invest heavily in autobiographical narcissism and the refraction of personal experience. We have no equipment for tracing the complex and subtle connectivities between the self and more impersonal forms of writing. Shakespeare might have become an actor, as in Jorge Luis Borges' great story "Everyone and No-one," because he had no sense of identity at all; and he may have written so many lives, because he never felt that he had lived even one.

And so if you tried to infer a life from Shakespeare's works you might not, it is true, arrive at the man from Stratford. But that is not because he did not write them: but because the relationship between the life and the works is far more complex and devious than you imagine, and may consist in discrepancy and discontinuity rather than in coherence. You might think that some other life story would fit the works better: the Earl of Oxford, or Christopher Marlowe, or the Holy Roman Emperor. But you would be whistling in the dark, because these works will never give up the identity of their author in anything like so definitive a way.

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(Precepts, cont. from p. 1)

had died in that Parish around the same time as Will — dates of death and dates of burial. Will died on April 23, 1616, and was buried on April 25, two days later. Not enough time for even word of his death to get to London, let alone for his friends there to attend the funeral. The verger found it strange, implying that maybe he had no friends in London after all, being only a local, illiterate person.

So when I saw Dan Donohue's powerful portrayal of Hamlet earlier this summer, it seemed so obvious to me that this was a description of the author's life. Indeed is it really possible for a writer to not write about his or her own life? It keeps seeping out of mind and heart as ink! Look at Hamlet: An Englishman obsessed, part brilliant, part mad, driven by ghostly influences and surrounded by his country's courtiers and intimates: Polonius — my ancestor William Cecil; Laertes — my uncle Robert Cecil; Ophelia — my aunt Anne de Vere; Gertrude as a manipulated Queen Elizabeth; Claudius as the dominant power held in the throne; The Ghost of Hamlet's father as the author's suspicions about his own royal origins; and Hamlet himself (my uncle by marriage), frustrated, angry, thwarted.

All of which leads me to the precepts of Polonius to his son Laertes.

A few years ago, my cousin Victoria Leatham, who lived at Burghley House (north of London) from 1982 to 2007, and managed the public side of this remarkable property (built by our mutual grandfather, the first Lord Burghley), gave me a copy of grandfather William's "Precepts for the Well Ordering and Carriage of a Man's Life." This little book, which smells suspiciously like hemp, was printed in 1637 and presumably had some more public circulation at that point, though it was — I understand — first printed in a non-book form about 1616 (the year

Will of Stratford died).

Lord Burghley's Precepts or maxims have been plagiarized by various people, who obviously thought they were good value, once they got out into public view, but they were first written for William's second son Robert while he was in his late teens, probably about 1582. My distant relative David Cecil in his book *The Cecils*



William Cecil, Lord Burghley, thought by informed scholars to be the prototype for the sagacious but bumbling Polonius in *Hamlet*.

of *Hatfield House*¹ refers to the Precepts as written by a "worldly Burghley," shrewd and observant. This is in contrast to his stern lecturing to Thomas, his elder son (my direct ancestor) — as a "religious Burghley" — in other writings. As I well know primogeniture can be hard on the relationship between father and elder son! Burghley himself remarked of Thomas, "I never showed any fatherly affection

to him."

Parenthetically, Edward de Vere, who was brought up in William's household from age 12 to 21, was probably viewed by him and his wife Mildred much like Thomas. Edward was, after all, the premier Earl in the country and in their minds should have acted in a manner "appropriate" to his station in life and often did not! Then he married William's daughter Anne Cecil, which would have aroused enough anxiety to drive his in-laws deeply into their most puritanical misgivings. Like Thomas as a young man, it seems Edward reacted to the rules of society in a similar wild way. With reference to his son-in-law, Burghley wrote to Walsingham at one point "No enemy I have can envy me this match." It seems that Thomas had a lifelong understanding of Edward's nature, who perhaps suffered from what we now call bi-polar problems. When we look at the page in the book which announces what it contains, we see the introduction first of the well known *Ten Precepts of Lord Burghley*, and then "An addition of some short Precepts, and sentences, not impertinent to the former."

One reason this part of the book is so interesting to me is that the first additional precept reads as follows: "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 endeavor to be so far from vainglory, that thou strive

in everything rather to be in substance without show, than in show without substance." This has a familiar ring to it! Consider Polonius's final precept (*Hamlet*, I.3): "This above all: to thine own self be true,/ And it must follow, as the night the day,/ Thou canst not then be false to any man." What artistry with words! Simplifying the convoluted and labored, making poetry out of profundity. This

(Continued on p. 22)

(Precepts, Cont. from p. 22)

is the wonderful ability of the writer of *Hamlet*. In my view these are the words of Edward de Vere.

In another version of the 1637 book a further 60 pages are included as “the jewel and delight of the right honorable, Lord and Father of his country, Francis, Earl of Bedford.” When Bedford died in 1585 he left his books and papers to Burghley.² Francis (for whom Francis Drake was named — Bedford was his godfather) and William were close friends and allies. Their religious and moral views matched. Like Burghley, Bedford was a faithful courtier for the Queen; both sat on the Queen’s Privy Council. Bedford was also Burghley’s neighbor. Cecil House on the Strand in London adjoined Bedford’s Covent Garden, which in those days really was a garden and pasture of several acres. Bedford gave Burghley “liberty to open the door or gate in order that he and his family might walk there.”³

David Cecil writes:

Burghley was one of the few noblemen of his generation who still maintained the ancient patriarchal custom by which all members of a great household from the greatest downward dined together in the Great Hall of his mansion. This meant a large gathering: Besides an army of dependents, chaplains, librarians, grooms, efficient, orderly servants....he kept open house to a throng of guests: relations, courtiers, men of learning....the conversation was of a high level and ranged over a great variety of subjects. Politics were barred; they might lead to indiscretion and in any case Burghley needed mealtimes to be a break in the day from his work.... he would turn to relax in talk about science and history and antiquities and theology and the classics.

It is easy to imagine exchanges at mealtime between Burghley and his friend and neighbor Bedford on “the well ordering and carriage of a man’s life,” in the hearing of those nearby. I can almost see family members rolling their eyes, as if to say, “here they go again!”

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? Some say that *Hamlet*



David Cecil writes that Burghley himself was “indifferent to music and poetry,” although he entertained the Queen a dozen times at his country house Theobalds with “masques and pageantry.” Probably his son-in-law had a hand in that Burghley, the ultimate pragmatist, did have an aesthetic side, which showed up in the beauty of his gardens. At Theobalds the garden there became as famous as his library. It was sad that the aesthetic part of Lord Burghley could not acknowledge the potency of artistic writing that was taking place right under his aquiline nose, that would so profoundly influence both the English language and the world in which we live today.



first appeared as early as 1589, but certainly it was written no later than 1603. In spite of the unease between the Burghleys

and Oxford, Edward and Anne and their children would have had ready access to Cecil House, its library, papers and other information at least until 1588 when Anne died, and even thereafter de Vere’s three daughters lived under Burghley’s roof.

Several writers have spoken of the similarities in *Hamlet* between the precepts of Polonius and those of Burghley. Mark Alexander writes articulately on this topic in “Polonius as Lord Burghley,” but I have not seen anywhere reference to this additional precept and Polonius, and I see a strong relatedness. Of course, Polonius had a different name in an early version of the play – Corambis – which to me reads from Latin: Cor = heart; ambis = from the same root as ambiguous. Thus “An ambiguous heart,” perhaps. A pretty obvious swipe at our family motto: Cor Unum, Via Una = One Heart, One Way. I thought you would enjoy seeing the family crest, which I brought with me. I personally am proud to identify with this motto today, and see it not as a statement of rigidity, but of wholehearted commitment to Truth, whatever that might prove to be. “This above all: To thine own self be true!”

David Cecil writes that Burghley himself was “indifferent to music and poetry,” although he entertained the Queen a dozen times at his country house Theobalds with “masques and pageantry.” Probably his son-in-law had a hand in that, but for the most part Burghley, as patron of Gray’s Inn, the dominant law school of the day, saw poetry, play writing and acting as no more than an exercise for young men preparing for a sober, but articulately agile, legal career. Burghley, the ultimate pragmatist, did have an aesthetic side, which showed up in the beauty of his gardens. At Theobalds the garden there became as famous as his library. It was sad that the aesthetic part of Lord Burghley could not acknowledge the potency of artistic writing that was taking place right under his aquiline nose, that would so profoundly influence both the English language and the world in which we live today.

A few final words about Lord Burghley, who was such a large presence in that era of English history. Stephen Alford writes in his 2008 book, *Burghley*: “Even at a

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enigma.”

The second issue includes book reviews of *Shakespeare and Garrick* by Vanessa Cunningham; *Othello*, a new critical edition by Ren Draya; *The Lame Storyteller* by Peter Moore; and *Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom* by Charles Beauclerk.

Indexed by the MLA International Bibliography and the World Shakespeare



Unlike many of the commentators who've weighed in about recent twitterations from Palin the Linguist, I come not to bury Sarah, but to praise her. She's absolutely right about Shakespeare's many contributions to the English language. And thanks to a long line of scrupulous editors, grammarians, and lexicographers, the usual totals don't even count a significant number of the playwright's wittiest inventions.



Bibliography, *Brief Chronicles* is an annual peer reviewed journal of Shakespeare research, authorship studies and the Tudor and Jacobean periods, with an interdisciplinary Board of scholars with terminal degrees in Economics, English, History, Law, Psychiatry, and Theater. The journal is published online by the Shakespeare Fellowship each autumn at www.briefchronicles.com free of charge. Submissions of papers, notes and reviews of books, theatrical productions and movies are welcome.

Eagan-Donovan Doc Receives Funding

In a recent email, Mark Anderson extends a note of thanks to the 84 donors (and counting!) to the “*Shakespeare By Another Name*”-inspired documentary (“Shakespeare in Venice: Nothing Is Truer Than Truth”). On 12:20 p.m. eastern (U.S.) time on December 1, the pledge drive reached its \$12,000 goal — which means the project is now fully funded!

Filmmaker Cheryl Eagan-Donovan will proceed to conduct her on-location filming and edit her four years worth of footage into a feature-length documentary ready for a distributor to take to the world at large.

Advanced Bardic Palinology

Unlike many of the commentators who've weighed in about recent twitterations from Palin the Linguist, I come not to bury Sarah, but to praise her. She's absolutely right about Shakespeare's many contributions to the English language. And thanks to a long line of scrupulous editors, grammarians, and lexicographers, the usual totals don't even count a significant number of the playwright's wittiest inventions.

In *Hamlet* 1.3, for example, in the 1604 quarto printing, Polonius warns Ophelia to beware of “brokers” who employ deceptive phrasing “the beter to beguide.” The 1623 First Folio printing replaced “beguide” by “beguile” in this passage, and that substitution is what a reader finds in most of today's editions, even in those which draw upon the earlier rendering of the text as their primary source. The one exception I'm familiar with is the Everyman Shakespeare, a paperback set which retains the original version as a coinage that deftly combines such senses as beguile, misguide, and beguile (overlay with gold).

I suspect that the poet who gave us Polonius would have delighted in “refudiate,” not only because it enriches our language with a new word that communicates

something that couldn't be conveyed in any other way, but because it's the sort of naive malapropism he puts into the mouths of other characters, among them such inspired and irrepressible bumpkins as Bottom the Weaver in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Dogberry the Master Constable in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

To borrow a line from *King Lear*, then, I say “let copulation thrive.” Fusing refute with repudiate may result in bastard currency; but as a means of defining Sarah Palin and the movement she embodies, it's just as apt as Bushisms like misunderesti-



To borrow a line from *King Lear*, then, I say “let copulation thrive.” Fusing “refute” with “repudiate” may result in bastard currency; but as a means of defining Sarah Palin and the movement she embodies, it's just as apt as Bushisms like “misunderestimate.”



mate. To certify a failed governor for a new position that would make her appear a bit less o'er-parted, moreover (to appropriate an expression from *Love's Labor's Lost*), it's what Shakespeare's most endearing Keystone Kop would dub “the eftest way.”

Now for the question of the hour. Do I believe that some reference to refudiate should be included in future guides to our political discourse? You betcha.

—John Andrews, President, The Shakespeare Guild

S.F. Member Waugaman at the Center for Advanced Psychoanalytic Studies

(Continued on p. 24)

(News, Cont. from p. 23)

In August Richard Waugaman presented one of two plenary papers during the two-week meeting of the Center for Advanced Psychoanalytic Studies. The response to his paper on de Vere was enthusiastic and supportive. While there, Waugaman learned that his submission for this October's Southeast Renaissance



Waugaman learned that his submission for this October's Southeast Renaissance Conference was accepted, either despite, or because of, the title: "An Oxfordian Quark, or a Quirky Oxfreudian? Psalm Evidence of de Vere's Authorship of Shakespeare's Works." The title is a dig at the Stratfordian tendency to dissipate their own intellectual energy thinking up new and ever-more-clever ways of dismissing the Oxfordian paradigm without rational examination.



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paradigm without rational examination (The late Louis Marder had a long list of dismissive tropes, including that we allegedly lack even an atom — nay, even an electron — of evidence for our theory).

Also while in Aspen, Waugaman received the proofs for two authorship articles forthcoming in the October issue of *The Psychoanalytic Review*: "Samuel Clemens and Mark Twain: Pseudonym as Act of Reparation," and "The Bisexuality of Shakespeare's Sonnets: Implications for de Vere's Authorship."

Showerman to Teach Southern Oregon University Course on Authorship

Shakespeare Fellowship President and Oxfordian scholar Earl Showerman will be teaching a winter 2010-11 course on authorship at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute of Southern Oregon University. Showerman's course description cites James Shapiro's recent book as well as the forthcoming Emmerich movie in his purpose statement: "The Shakespeare authorship controversy is the subject of James Shapiro's critical analysis, *Contested Will*, and also the inspiration for Roland Emmerich's feature film, *Anonymous*, starring Vanessa Redgrave as Queen Elizabeth. A critique of Shapiro's book and other authorship biographies will be presented, along with a review of selected papers presented at the 2010 Ashland Authorship Conference."

SQ to Experiment with Online Pre-publication Comments

In August 24 *New York Times* story by Patricia Cohen, "Scholars Test Web Alternative to Peer Review," reports that the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, among other academic journals, has embraced digital media.

That transformation was behind the recent decision by the prestigious 60-year-old journal to embark on an uncharacteristic experiment in the forthcoming fall issue — one that will make it, Ms. Rowe says, the first traditional humanities

journal to open its reviewing to the World Wide Web.

Mixing traditional and new methods, the journal posted online four essays not yet accepted for publication, and a core group of experts — what Rowe called "our crowd sourcing" — were invited to post their signed comments on the Web site Media Commons, a scholarly digital network. Others could add their thoughts as well, after registering with their own names. In the end 41 people made more than 350 comments, many of which elicited responses from the authors. The revised essays were then reviewed by the *Quarterly's* editors, who made the final decision to include them in the printed journal.

The SQ trial, along with a handful of other trailblazing digital experiments, goes to the very nature of the scholarly enterprise. Traditional peer review has shaped the way new research has been screened for quality and then how it is communicated; it has defined the border between the public and an exclusive group of specialized experts.

The most daunting obstacle to opening up the process is that peer-review publishing is the path to a job and tenure, and no would-be professor wants to be the academic canary in the coal mine.

The first question that Alan Galey, a junior faculty member at the University of Toronto, asked when deciding to participate in the SQ experiment was whether his essay would ultimately count toward tenure. "I went straight to the dean with it," Galey said (It would.)

Although initially cautious, Galey said he is now "entirely won over by the open peer review model." The comments were more extensive and more insightful, he said, than he otherwise would have received on his essay, which discusses Shakespeare in the context of information theory.

Year's Work in English Studies

For those who haven't yet had a chance to peruse the newly released 2010 *Year's Work in English Studies*, some items will be of amusement or interest to Oxfordians.

First, from the "we make the rules,

you follow them” Department: “According to Lesser and Stallybrass’s narrative, around 1607 Shakespeare decided to relearn his trade and apprenticed himself to George Wilkins and John Fletcher in order to get the hang of tragicomedie.” Yeah, right! That’s way more likely than thinking de Vere left some unfinished manuscripts at his death, that were completed by other playwrights.

Then there’s this gem on the topic of



First, from the “we make the rules, you follow them” Department: “According to Lesser and Stallybrass’s narrative, around 1607 Shakespeare decided to relearn his trade and apprenticed himself to George Wilkins and John Fletcher in order to get the hang of tragicomedie.” Yeah, right! That’s way more likely than thinking de Vere left some unfinished manuscripts at his death, that were completed by other playwrights.



“be sure not to spell like de Vere”: “Broadening the net to look at the rarest spellings across the whole of Literature Online, Shakespeare still predominates: these are genuinely rare spellings in absolute terms, and they are common to *A Lover’s Complaint* and Shakespeare. [MacDonald P.] Jackson shows that a number of apparent errors in early editions of Shakespeare can be explained if we accept that the spellings uncovered in this study *really*

are Shakespeare’s idiosyncratic habits” (Emphasis added).

Let’s see now, what did Alan Nelson write about de Vere’s spelling habits? Oh, yes — that he had no fixed way of spelling many words, but spelled “half-penny” eleven different ways. And what about “Hand D” in the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More*, which spells “Sheriff” five ways in five lines and “country” three ways in two lines. Just coincidence, no doubt.

We seem to be making progress of the topic of “less Greek”: “[Laurie] Maguire argues for the influence of Euripides’ strange Helen play on *All’s Well That Ends Well*. Thus, she questions scholars’ continuing scepticism as to Shakespeare’s familiarity with Greek originals.” Haven’t they heard that grammar schools back then taught advanced Greek?

In an article entitled “Who Do the People Love?” Richard Levin discusses Shakespeare’s opinions on politics. In Levin’s experience, it is difficult for critics to point out Shakespeare’s attitude to politics: “in Shakespeare there are only three extended treatments of ‘the people’ as a separate political agency: the Roman plebeians in the first three acts of *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*, and Jack Cade’s rebels in Act IV of *2 Henry VI*. In all three plays they appear as a mindless, fickle and murderous ‘rabble.’” Levin thus clearly demonstrates that while critics have “wanted Shakespeare to favor democracy, there is every reason to believe that he did not.” Why exactly are critics so determined that Shakespeare should support democracy? Is it because he couldn’t possibly have been an aristocrat?

In a thought-provoking article on “Shakespeare as Coauthor,” Jeffrey Knapp looks into Shakespeare’s return to co-authorship at the end of his career. Knapp notes that, according to current histories of authorship in Renaissance drama, “collective playwriting was both the practical and the theoretical norm in English theaters until around 1600, when the idea of single dramatic authorship first began to surface.” Right — Shakespeare was out of step, turning to co-authorship several years after other playwrights began abandoning it. But let’s not forget, he had to become an apprentice because he couldn’t figure out how to write romances

without help.

—Richard Waugaman

Stritmatter and Kositsky in SY

fter a long delay occasioned by the untimely death of editor Douglass Brooks, Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky’s most recent article in their *Tempest* series has finally seen print in the the 2010 issue of *The Shakespeare Yearbook*. Their article, “A Moveable Feast: *The Tempest* as Shrovetide Revelry,” explores in detail the implications of the idea that this late



Brooks and the SY reviewers, on the other hand, seem to have been thoroughly impressed by the article’s argument, which was accepted within 48 hours of its Fall 2006 submission to SY. In an 11/25/06 email reiterating his acceptance of the essay, Brooks stated, “I love your essay, and so too did the editorial board.”



play was written, not as has sometimes been supposed, for a 1611 Hallowmass Production (the first surviving record of performance of a play by that title is from November 1, 1611), but for Shrovetide. If this is so, the play’s earliest possible *terminus ad quem* (“date before which”) would be spring, not fall, 1611. In several other articles, either published or forthcoming, Stritmatter and Kositsky have, however, argued, principally on the basis

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(News, Cont. from p. 25)

of the play's extensive intertextuality with much earlier Jacobean and Elizabethan plays, that *Tempest* was well known to London audiences by 1603.

The article was previously submitted to another leading Shakespearean journal, but was rejected by editors who claimed that "The Shrovetide connections that you do include do not seem particularly telling to us, but rather more generic...The result is that *The Tempest* does not seem altered or transformed by your reading in a way persuasive to us."

Brooks and the *SY* reviewers, on the other hand, seem to have been thoroughly impressed by the article's argument, which was accepted within 48 hours of its submission. In a November 25, 2006, email reiterating his acceptance of the essay, Brooks stated, "I love your essay, and so too did the editorial board." This enthusiasm, while apparently not universally shared by the Shakespearean powers that be, was reiterated in a later email to Stritmatter: "your *superb essay* appears as Article no 16 in the forthcoming issue of the *SY*" (emphasis supplied).

Robbie Brazil, Oxfordian Researcher, RIP

hakespeare Matters was saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Robert Brazil, longtime Oxfordian researcher known and treasured by many in the Oxfordian community. Among other accomplishments Brazil, with Barb Flues, was the founder and operator of the outstanding website, www.Elizabethanauthors.com. He also founded and managed an active Oxfordian listserve, Elizaforum and published numerous articles in *The Oxfordian*, the SOS newsletter, and other venues. *Brief Chronicles* editors are in possession of an outstanding study by Brazil of the significance of Angel Day's *English Secretary* (f.p. 1586) for the authorship question. A more complete reflection on Brazil's life and accomplishments will appear in the next issue of *Shakespeare Matters*.

Showerman Recognized by Gale Publishing

he Gale Publishing Group has invited a contributor to the first issue of *Brief Chronicles*, Dr. Earl Showerman, M.D., entrepreneur and President of the Shakespeare Fellowship, to contribute his essay on the Greek origins of *Much Ado About Nothing* to its forthcoming reference text, *Shakespeare Criticism*, due out next spring. Thanks to the hard work of Managing Editor Gary Goldstein, every article from *Brief Chronicles* is also now abstracted in the *MLA International Bibliography* and *World Shakespeare Bibliography* databases, the two most prestigious academic reference tools covering topics germane to our interdisciplinary focus on authorship studies.

It may be enlightening to consider the implications of Gale's decision to reprint Showerman's article on the Greek sources of *Much Ado*. Here is part of Showerman's unapologetic conclusion:

When one considers the acknowledged sources of *Much Ado*, it could be argued that this comedy is the most "Oxfordian"

of all the plays for its connections to Edward de Vere's literary patronage. The works dedicated to him by John Lyly, Anthony Munday, and Thomas Watson have all been identified as primary sources for this comedy. That both *Much Ado* and *Winter's Tale* must now also be recognized as borrowing dramaturgy from a Greek tragicomedy also reinforces Oxford's authorship claim...[his] education and access to the Greek classics is well documented. For a number of years, the young Oxford lived in the home of Cambridge scholar and Greek orator, Sir Thomas Smith, who lectured in Greek from Homer, Aristotle, Euripides, and Aristophanes.

(*Mouse and Lion, cont. from p. 2*)

all. And she could publish the truth in *The Stallion Quarterly*, the journal of which she is the managing editor."

"SQ? Lion's not very sympathetic when it comes to small



"Hm," said Snail. He tended to think long and carefully about matters, so Mouse nipped home to get some elderberry wine. Snail was still thinking when she returned. "Hm," he said finally, "I believe we should tell Lion. She's the Queen of the forest, after all. And she could publish the truth in *The Stallion Quarterly*, the journal of which she is the managing editor."

"SQ? Lion's not very sympathetic when it comes to small creatures and their theories," said Mouse. "I've even heard she ate one or two of the smaller denizens of the forest when she disagreed with their submission, so I don't think it's a very good idea."

"Got any better ones?"



creatures and their theories," said Mouse. "I've even heard she ate one or two of the smaller denizens of the forest when she disagreed

with their submission, so I don't think it's a very good idea."

"Got any better ones?" asked Snail snidely. Mouse hadn't, not on the spur of the moment, anyway, so a little fearfully, off they went to find Lion, who was holding her daily audience in the clearing. Snail was so slow that by the time they got there Lion was packing up her microphone.

"Your majesty," Mouse squeaked, "Please wait. We have something to tell you. It's about Scratcher the rat. He's been copying from Frederick Titmouse. His copying affects the dating of Ben McJonson's *Beastwood Ho*. Could you put the story in *The Stallion Quarterly*? I'd be very pleased to write it up for you."

"The rat is an old friend of mine, and a very lively fellow. I respectfully decline," roared Lion, baring her fangs. She didn't sound or look respectful at all. Mouse retreated.

Snail was braver. "Why so?" he asked ponderously, peering over his glasses.

"It's our sense that *Beastwood Ho* researchers have recently pulled back from making strong claims for Gentle Ben's knowledge of Scratcher's adventures." Lion stood up lazily, stretched her back legs, and flicked her tail back and forth.

"Hm. We wonder, your majesty, if you might clarify your comment," responded Snail, very bravely indeed. "Do you see evidence substantiating this trend? We would of course be most gratified by your assistance in clarifying the substance of current trends within the discipline."

Mouse nodded in agreement, though she didn't understand a single word Snail had uttered. But then she rarely understood what Snail said. She rarely understood what Lion said either. She trusted, though, that they understood each other, and that was enough for her. How clever she had been to choose Snail as her literary partner. He was a deep, if slow, thinker.

"Snail, you're brilliant," she said, jumping up and down.

"Not now, Mouse. I'm busy."

"No, you're not," roared Lion. "We're done here. Go away."

"We are preparing an article on the subject anyway, and I wonder if I might quote you," said Snail, advancing, albeit slowly.

"No you can't," replied Lion, looking even more dangerous and placing her paw directly over Snail's shell as if about to crush it. She swished her tail a couple more times before glaring at both of them and departing.

"Oh dear," sighed Mouse, who had suddenly remembered that Lion was a very big *cat*.

"Never mind, Mousie. We'll write the article for *Snakespeare Matters*. The editor is a small creature himself. He'll be sure to publish us. Let's go back to your house, as my shell isn't big enough for the two of us. You hold the quill and I'll dictate."

"Why don't you do the writing for once while I dictate?" asked Mouse.

"Because I have no arms, silly."

"Oh, right you are. Sorry."

They set to work. *Snakespeare Matters* published their article the very next week. There was much arguing over it. Some animals, mostly small ones, agreed with what it said. Some did not. Fights broke out in the forest. A couple of ants got squashed in the melee, and a mallard had his wing broken by a demented pig. Then all hell broke loose, as the very next edition of the *Stallion Quarterly* carried a rebuttal of Mouse's theory by Alden

Prawn, an old but distinguished crustacean.

"He's just an overgrown shrimp trying to look important," said Mouse. "After Lion said that research animals were moving away from the idea that Scratcher influenced *Beastwood Ho*, she published Prawn saying the exact opposite. "At least," she continued, looking confused, "That's what I thought Lion said."

"She did indeed say that. We'll ask her if she'll publish our rebuttal in *SQ*. It would be the fair thing for her to do."

"But if we ask it might nettle her. We should try somewhere else first." Mouse sounded fearful, as well she might. As well as being catty, Lion held the keys to the forest. She could make them most unwelcome there. So unwelcome, they found out soon enough, that *Snakespeare Matters* was afraid to carry their response to Alden Prawn, as were all the other journals.

The Stallion Quarterly, they realized, was their last resort. Mouse picked up her quill once more, as Snail dictated the following letter:



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next edition of the *Stallion Quarterly*

carried a rebuttal of Mouse's theory by

Alden Prawn, an old but distinguished

crustacean.



Your Majesty,

Although Dr. Alden Prawn's *Stallion Quarterly* critique of our *Snakespeare Matters* article, "*Beastwood Ho Goes South*," raises a number of interesting points (most of them not relevant to the questions at issue in our article), he also accuses us of making mistakes that are based on his own misreading of the evidence. In light of these errors, we are writing to request the right of reply.

Ever Sincerely Yours,
Mercurial Mouse &
N. O. Hazmat Snail

(Continued on p. 28)

(*Mouse and Lion, cont. from p. 27*)

“Absolutely not,” snarled Lion in response, the next time she held audience. “Send your request to the *Review of Elephant Studies*.”



“He’s just an overgrown shrimp trying to look important,” said Mouse. “After Lion said that research animals were moving away from the idea that Scratcher influenced *Beastward Ho*, she published Prawn saying the exact opposite. “At least,” she continued, looking confused, “That’s what I thought Lion said.”

“She did indeed say that. We’ll ask her if she’ll publish our rebuttal in *SQ*. It would be the fair thing for her to do.”

“But if we ask it might nettle her. We should try somewhere else first.” Mouse sounded fearful, as well she might. As well as being catty, Lion held the keys to the forest. She could make them most uncomfortable there.



“The *View of Irrelevant Studies?*” asked a feeble and rather deaf rabbit. Everyone ignored him.

“We did send to them,” admitted

Snail; his glasses slipped right to the end of his nose, and looked about to fall off. “They replied, and I quote: ‘It’s a very good essay. But this controversy is, it seems, a matter of acute concern to large animals because of the ferocity of the small creature camp.’ They too declined to publish.”

“*RES* won’t publish any creature smaller than a goat,” Mouse added sadly. “They did publish us once, but it was before they realized how little we were.”

Lion grinned like a Cheshire cat and licked her lips in dismissal.

Many hours later the two friends discussed their options. “It was a bit better when Whale Corn Plaster was editor of *SQ*,” sighed Mouse. “At least she didn’t roar.”

“A very little bit better. But she ate small fishes for breakfast. Lion and Whale are cut from the same cloth. They are both Masters of their domains, as Swinefeld would say. So all the big animals have closed ranks,” said Snail. “And the small ones are afraid of them. We’ve been silenced. What shall we do? Mouse, think. You’re the ideas person.”

“I am?”

“Yes. At least, you’re the GOOD ideas person.”

“I’m just a mollusk with attitude.”

“No,” said Mouse, “you’re the brilliant one, Snail, but I did have one thought. We should tell small creatures everywhere what the big animals are doing. The big animals don’t seem to care what’s true and what’s not. They only want to keep us out. In a weird kind of way, the biggies are afraid of us, tiny though we are, because we might change the acc...acc...”

“Accepted wisdom?” suggested Snail. “You’re right. Perhaps we should broadcast what’s happening.”

“Yes,” agreed Mouse. “Perhaps we could nail the truth to a tree where everyone could read it.”

“Hm,” said Snail, before shutting himself in his shell.

“How annoying he can be,” thought Mouse, as Snail had closed his shutters and appeared to have gone to bed. But she made a few posters without him and nailed them up. Two squirrels and a hare were reading them when she went inside. “We won’t reach enough small creatures this way,” she realized, as she closed the door. “We have to speak to them, the way Lion

does. If only she would let us.”

Early the next morning, mistaking the sun coming up for the sun going down and convinced it was late afternoon, Mouse knocked on Snail’s carapace.

“Listen, Snail,” she said, when Snail, somewhat irritated, finally popped his sleepy head out, “I have an even better



If the big animals don’t let us, all they have is a pyrrh... pyrrh...”

“Pyrrhic Victory,” Snail said helpfully.

“Exactly so,” agreed Mouse.

“We may be little, but together we would be a force to be reckoned with,” said Snail.

“Let’s go to speak to the small creatures right away. How’s this for a message?”

**“HEAR YE, PALS OF SPANIEL WRIGHT,
CRITTERS OF THE WORLD
UNITE
AGAINST THE LION AND HER
MIGHT.”**

**“That will do very well,”
smiled Mouse.**



idea. Dr. Spaniel Wright is holding a conference in his kennel for small animals who believe that Edward the Deer, the Earl of Foxford, and not Snakespeare, was the true Author of *The Maiming of the Shrew*, *The Winter’s Quail*, and *The Serpent of Venice*. Alex McSeal and Hen Draya are speaking there. And if those guys believe in Eddie the Deer, they’ll probably accept our theory

too—that a fat rat who considers himself Honcho Numero Uno didn't influence the writing of *Beastward Ho*—especially when we present our evidence that Alden Prawn has gone over to the dark side. And we should tell them that all the big animals round about are denying us a fair chance to write a response. But if the big animals don't let us, all they have is a pyrr...pyrrh..."

"Pyrrhic Victory," Snail said helpfully.

"Exactly so," agreed Mouse.

"We may be little, but together we would be a force to be reckoned with," said Snail. "Let's go to speak to the small creatures right away. How's this for a message?"

"HEAR YE, PALS OF SPANIEL WRIGHT,
CRITTERS OF THE WORLD UNITE
AGAINST THE LION AND HER MIGHT."

"That will do very well," smiled Mouse. "Snail, for such a tiny creature, as I've said before, you have a very good head on your shoulders."

"I don't have shoulders, Mouse. But thank you anyway."

"You're welcome." Mouse curtsied. The two little animals set off for the conference at the kennel, which was just beyond the confines of the forest. Snail being who and what he was, it would take them a very long time to get there. But as all Foxfordians know, slow and steady wins the race. However, the real moral of this story is, "Don't mess with mice or you'll get nailed."

Assigned Reading

Chickenheart, Richard. *The Theory and Practice of Pyrrhic Victories*. M.T. Publishing, 2010.

Draya, Hen. *Chick Flicks*. Egghead Editions, 2005.

Draya, Hen. *O Hell, O Hell, O: A Revised Edition of the Beastly Play*. Oxfreudian Editions, 2009.

Greentail, Rima. *Edward de Bear's Geography: The Russian Connection*. Foxy Press. Forthcoming, 2012.

Prawn, Professor Alden. *Jumbo Shrimp: Another Look at the Word "Obvious."*

(Continued on p. 30)

(Road Not Taken, cont. from p. 3)

would deny the relevance of the works of commoners such as John Lyly, Robert



Had he read either of the two the recent issues (2009, 2010) of *Brief Chronicles*, Holderness might have encountered something more intriguing than an obsession with autobiography, and realized that the field of authorship studies includes a multi-disciplinary examination of many topics including inter-textuality and untranslated sources, of early dating, of problems associated with traditional interpretation of documentary records, and of reflections on the psychology of Shakespearean biography. To reduce authorship studies to an exercise in identifying autobiographical themes in Shakespeare is as pathetic a misrepresentation as Stephen Greenblatt's likening Oxfordian scholarship to holocaust denial.



Greene, Anthony Munday, Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, or Thomas Nashe. What Holderness objects to most

strenuously, reflecting a theme cultivated by James Shapiro in *Contested Will*, is that we have "lost all sense of any relationship between the self and writing that does not invest heavily in autobiographical narcissism and the refraction of personal experience." Had he read the recent issue of *Brief Chronicles*, the professor might have encountered something more than an obsession with autobiography, and realized that the field of authorship studies includes an interdisciplinary examination of many topics including inter-textuality and untranslated sources, of early dating, of problems associated with traditional interpretation of documentary records, and of reflections on the psychology of Shakespearean biography. To reduce authorship studies to an exercise in identifying autobiographical themes in Shakespeare is as pathetic a misrepresentation as Stephen Greenblatt's likening Oxfordian scholarship to holocaust denial.

In "Bardolatry" (1988) Professor Holderness presents his answer to the authorship challenge by posing a rhetorical question:

Who was William Shakespeare – Francis Bacon or the Earl of Oxford? Son of a provincial glover or a scion of the aristocracy or haute bourgeoisie? Ultimately it is a myth that explains the old quarrels about the true authorship of Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare was the son of a Stratford small businessman, but England's greatest poet must surely have had a more exalted parentage. So he became Lord Bacon, the Earl of Oxford, Sir Walter Raleigh, Queen Elizabeth herself.¹

Holderness thus, nonchalantly, re-mythologizes the authorship question.

Ironically, Shakespeare authorship studies are actually devoted to the same issues Holderness appears to find most fascinating, the pursuit of the "profound questions about life and writing, the self and identity, personal expression and impersonal artistry..." Perhaps if he had actually read recent Oxfordian research that directly addresses the relationship between the life and the works, his

(Continued on p. 30)

(Road Not Taken, cont. from p. 29)

claims of “discrepancy and discontinuity” might have surrendered to the greater “coherence” we share because we are not “whistling in the dark” but rather pursuing greater illumination amidst a professorial cacophony.

Endnotes

¹ Holderness, Graham. “Bardolatry (1988)” in *Cultural Shakespeare: Essays in the Shakespeare Myth*. University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001, 137.

(Precepts, cont. from p. 22)

distance of four centuries it is hard not to be impressed by the scale of Burghley’s life and the power of his personality. He was a man who believed with a terrifying intensity. He saw his world in black and white. He thought in absolutes.”

And so, for all the contradictions and complexities of William Cecil’s character, the strains of life in government, the great talents as well as the darker skills of the ruthless political operator, the discipline and the control, William Camden’s encomium says so much about “a minister, a humble functionary, a man of controlled passion.”⁴ In my view a just, and honorable man, who has sometimes been unfairly maligned.

Endnotes

¹ *The Cecils of Hatfield House*. David Cecil. Constable. 1973.

² *Review of English Studies*. Oct 1931. Byrne and Thomson. “My Lord’s Books.”

³ *Survey of London*, Vol 36. The Bedford Estate from 1541 to 1627.

⁴ Stephen Alford *Burghley - William Cecil at the Court of Queen Elizabeth*. 2008.

(Mouse and Lion, cont. from p. 29)

Oxymoron Press, 2008.

Robin, Christopher. “Teddy Bear,” *The Complete Tales & Poems of Winnie the Pooh*. E.P. Dutton, 1997:436-440.

Wright, Spaniel. *Snakespeare’s Puritan Ways*. Dog-Eared Books, 1986.



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“How annoying he can be,” thought Mouse, as Snail had closed his shutters and appeared to have gone to bed.

*(Hamlet Himself, cont. from p. 11)*

¹⁰ “The Bisexuality of Shakespeare’s Sonnets and Implications for de Vere’s Authorship.” *Psychoanalytic Review* 97(2010):857-879. As I wrote there, of de Vere’s likely bisexuality, “A striking factor in scholarly debate about the Sonnets is a widespread assumption, based on...either/or thinking, that the poet was either heterosexual or homosexual... Many critics then use this evidence of his heterosexuality as prima facie evidence that he therefore could not possibly have been homosexual. A frequent example of this highly questionable line of reasoning is the argument that no homosexual poet would have urged his lover to marry, as Sonnets 1-17 urge... [W.H.] Auden is among those Sonnet critics who privately admitted what they publicly repudiated: that the first 126 Sonnets were about a consummated homosexual love affair.”

¹¹ Only a few decades ago, the United States military took an analogous view, regarding passive homosexuality as severely pathological, while condoning men who took the active role sexually with other men.

¹² In fact, Feldman himself, in his 1953 article, claimed that Sonnet 20 “should suffice to end all speculation concerning [de Vere’s] homosexuality” (131). However, he went on to admit two sentences later that “It is possible that Shakespeare [i.e., de Vere] experimented with male-love.”

¹³ According to the OED, a word first used by Ben Jonson in his 1605 *Sejanus* to denote “a man or boy who is the passive partner in homosexual anal intercourse.”

¹⁴ Attributed to Sophocles in the 1559 *Chronicles of Thomas Lanquet*. Also included in Henry Smith’s 1591 book, *A Preparative to Marriage: Whereunto is Annexed a Treatise of the Lord’s Supper*. EEBO has very few other similar early instances of the phrase “is silence” (other than in the phrase “there is silence”).

¹⁵ (London: Reinolde Wolfe and Richarde Harison). Although Stuart Gillespie’s comprehensive collection of Shakespeare’s literary allusions omits Calvin, Arthur Golding dedicated his translation of Calvin’s Psalm commentaries to de Vere. See Charles K. Cannon, “‘As in a Theater’: Hamlet in the Light of Calvin’s Doctrine of Predestination.” *Studies in English Literature* 11 (1971): 203-222.

(Shapiro, cont. from p. 14)

on Shakespeare's imagination – a spin-off of the old circular reasoning that all it took to write the works of Shakespeare was “genius” – seems to hold sway for now. One might ask what



In fact, there's a power struggle going on. Who has the clout to tell the average man-on-the-street what to think? It's an uphill battle, but if the doubters, skeptics, heretics, and conspiracy theorists (whoever they are and by whatever pejorative names the dismissive academicians call them) can ultimately turn the tide of public opinion in their favor, then it will be clear that people in positions of authority have created and perpetuated a delusional alternative reality.



goes through the minds of these reviewers when they pull off the shelf any one of the eight volumes of Geoffrey Bullough's *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. Assuming that the orthodox writers have a passing familiarity with this reference, are they unable to see that the Shakespeare Canon is,

among other things, an encyclopedia of classical and Renaissance literary references? And plucking all this information from air is a lot to ask of imagination. It suggests that the imagination is all their own.

Nevertheless, with so much reinforcement up and down the food chain, many readers of Shapiro's book may be convinced by his arguments. Maybe many will accept Shapiro's verdict without further ado, glad that he is doing their thinking for them. But maybe a few readers of these various columns will want to dig a little deeper. Maybe they will wonder what the ruckus is all about. Maybe here and there someone senses that something more is going on than merely the solution to an intriguing historical mystery.

If so, they're right. And this, too, is something acknowledged by Shapiro. In an interview in the *Los Angeles Times*, he speaks of “cultural authority.” In fact, there's a power struggle going on. Who has the clout to tell the average man-on-the-street what to think? It's an uphill battle, but if the doubters, skeptics, heretics, and conspiracy theorists (whoever they are and by whatever pejorative names the dismissive academicians call them) can ultimately turn the tide of public opinion in their favor, then it will be clear that people in positions of authority have created and perpetuated a delusional alternative reality.

The academic establishment would be well advised to open up its intellectual borders and join in the quest for truth and justice, rather than circling the wagons in a steely effort to maintain the official story. But, sadly, the purpose of *Contested Will* is to preserve the status quo, keeping in place the Stratford myth so that the economic, intellectual and psychological investments built up over the centuries will continue to prosper. If *Contested Will* succeeds in furthering this goal, then James Shapiro has well deserved the misplaced adulation he has received for this book.



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**Will – Wunsch und
Wirklichkeit**

James Shapiro's *Contested Will*



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Robert Detobel's *Will Wunsch und Wirklichkeit* (*Will: Wish and Reality*), Verlag Uwe Laugwitz, 2010 — the first book length reply to James Shapiro's wishful history of the authorship question. Look for a review in a future issue of *Shakespeare Matters*.

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— Bonner Miller Cutting (see p. 12)

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