



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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Shakespeare's Perspective Art

by Michael Delahoyde, PhD



“Did you never see the picture of ‘we three’?” So asks Feste in *Twelfth Night* when he first joins Sir Toby and Sir Andrew in their nighttime revels (2.3.16-17), referring to a cheeky renaissance image of two fools or asses’ heads and bearing the inscription “We Three”(a modern version is shown above), which insultingly alludes past the two-dimensional image itself, implicating the viewer in a kind of triangulation as the only available third presence: When you look at the image, you are the third jackass.

Shakespeare loves such examples of art with additional dimensions, just as theatrical performance adds a dimension to dramatic text, bringing words on the page

to life. He would have been delighted by the Op Art movement, short for Optical Illusion Art, in which works feature retinal or *trompe l’oeil* (French for “deceives the eye”) phenomena—illusions of movement, afterimages, moiré effects—to confound the normal processes of perception. Although the term Op Art emerged in the 1960s referring to works created in that era, an earlier form of illusion art became popular in the 16th century, and Shakespeare could have seen—oh wait, no: he would have to have traveled to Italy to have seen it.

The Earl of Oxford saw numerous examples of Optical Illusion Art in his Italian travels, especially in Mantua, much of it crafted by the only living artist

(Continued on page 13)

From the President's Office:

Dear Members,

When we unified the two main Oxfordian groups in North America last year, part of our plan was to include both of our excellent journals, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*, as benefits of membership. We expect to fulfill that promise this year, as *Brief Chronicles* has already been sent out and *The Oxfordian* will be issued this year as well. We know, however, that for most of you, when you join the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, you are doing more than just purchasing newsletters and journals from us, you are helping to spread the word and support research about Edward de Vere as the man behind the "Shakespeare" mask. Unfortunately, we are finding that it will be difficult to continue to include two journals along with membership in the coming years. The costs of printing and mailing our journals and newsletter have increased dramatically, just within the last year. We will have to make some changes in the way we operate and we want to get your input before we make final decisions about how to proceed.

This year, it will cost about \$26 per member to print and mail our quarterly newsletter and about \$36 per member to print and mail *each* of the two journals (and

even more for members outside the US). That's \$98 a year to send out the newsletter, *The Oxfordian*, and *Brief Chronicles*, while regular dues are only \$65. We knew when we started the year that some additional donations would be necessary to help support our publications. We have managed to stay within our budget this year, but it will be difficult to continue to do this as costs keep increasing.

Here are some solutions to the problem that the Board of Trustees has been discussing. We will probably implement a solution that combines the best of the following:

(1) Encourage e-membership. It costs much less, of course, to send electronic versions of the journals and newsletter than to print and mail them. We should change our e-membership so that an e-member has full voting rights as a member of the SOF (they don't have this at present) and has full access to the latest journals and newsletters online. The most recent issues of our publications will continue to be password protected so that only members can access them. Those who still want print versions of the publications would pay dues at a higher rate.

(2) Alternating journals. We are proud of the track records that our two scholarly journals, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*, have created, but it is expensive to

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

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

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

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

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produce both journals in the same year. One solution would be to have alternating, biannual journals – for example, publish *Brief Chronicles* one year and *The Oxfordian* the next. An advantage of this is that, with a wider gap between the publications of the two journals, they will be less likely to be competing with each other for articles.

(3) Exploring less expensive print options, such as Print-on-Demand. This is a new area that we are looking into for the journals. It may be much less expensive, but we also want to get a quality print job. If this approach seems feasible, one option would be to allow members to buy print-on-demand copies of the journals on their own, probably through Amazon. All members would have access to the journals electronically and dues could be kept fairly low, but printed journals would no longer be a perk of membership; you would simply buy them from Amazon if you want them.

Unfortunately, the cost of international mailing has soared so much recently that we would probably have to add \$25 or more for overseas members who want to receive print copies of the journal and newsletter. Even the costs of mailing to Canada from the U.S. have risen dramatically. Thus, electronic membership might be the best alternative for many international members.

To give you an idea of how membership might work, suppose that we decide to have alternating journals, so that only one journal is published each year. The dues structure might be something like this (the figures, in U.S. dollars, are estimates, not set in stone):

E-membership (includes full voting rights and electronic access to all the most recent journals and newsletters): \$40 for all members.

Second level (includes full voting rights, print copies of the quarterly newsletter, and electronic access to all journals): \$60 to US, \$66 to Canada, \$73 elsewhere.

Third level: (includes full voting rights, a print copy of the journal published that year, and electronic access to all newsletters): \$65 to US, \$74 to Canada, \$77 elsewhere.

Fourth level: (includes full voting rights, print copies of the quarterly newsletter *and* the journal): \$80 to US, \$95 to Canada, \$105 elsewhere.

All members would have electronic access to all journals and newsletters.

Note that if we were to include printed copies of *two* journals and four issues of the newsletter along with membership, we would have to ask for dues of *at least* \$100 to cover our costs and that would not leave anything to cover the Fellowship's other activities, such as our conferences, website, and research program.

We would add an additional charge for family memberships (which includes voting rights for two people). Members at all levels will be entitled to a discount on registration fees for attending our annual conferences.

We'd like to hear your thoughts, feelings, and reactions. For example, do you much prefer the printed newsletters and journals to the electronic versions? Are you willing to pay more for print? Would you be less likely to renew your membership if we went to the dues structure listed above (or something close to it)? Would you be less likely to renew if you could only afford to be an e-member? Do you feel that we *must* publish both journals every year? We want to hear your viewpoints on these important matters.

The Board of Trustees will have to make the final decision about how to proceed with our publications, but first we want to hear from you, our members. Please contact John Hamill at hamillx@pacbell.net, and let us know what you think. These matters will be discussed at our Annual Meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, on September 13. If you won't be attending the meeting, we'd appreciate having your comments by September 8.

John Hamill, President

Tom Regnier, First Vice President

Letters to the Editor

I had contacted Dr. Gail Paster, Director Emerita, of the Folger Institute about having a letter to the editor published in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* to address an issue I have with a comment made about me in that publication (William L. Pressly, "The Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare: Through the Looking Glass," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44.1: 54-72 [1993]). I was told that the issue did not warrant publication but that my letter would be put into the archive and made available to anyone interested. Since I also addressed some discussion that appeared in *Shakespeare Matters* (Barbara Burris, "Ashbourne Story III: Close Review of the Painting's Restoration Reveals a History of Deception and Destruction," *Shakespeare Matters* 1.3: 10-22 [2002]), I am sending you the same letter in the hope that you will publish it as that journal will not.

The identity of the person known to history as William Shakespeare is a mystery that has been discussed extensively in print, filmed documentaries and in popular cinema. I do not purport to venture any opinion on the topic in this letter. I only wish to contribute my personal observations to the conversation. I specifically want to address footnote 27 in the publication by Pressly published in *Shakespeare Quarterly* and the discussion of Burris in various issues of *Shakespeare Matters*, especially that printed in 2002. My reason for writing is that both publications commented on the sketch made by me in 1979 of the coat of arms in the background of the Ashbourne portrait.

In his article, Dr. Pressly discussed the coat of arms in the painting background as a means of identifying the sitter. This is a logical idea. When the painting was cleaned in 1979 at the Twelve Oaks Regional Conservation Center in Baltimore, MD, I was employed there as an assistant to Peter E. Michaels, the head conservator. Michaels removed some of the overpaint which had been added after the original portrait was painted. At some point in its history, the portrait had been altered to make the sitter resemble the conventional images of William Shakespeare. It had been known prior to the 1979 cleaning, mainly through X-ray images, that a coat of arms was present. Once the overpainting was removed, it was apparent that the crest had been partially scraped away, damaging it greatly. Michaels was always very thorough in making photographic documentation of paintings that he worked on. He was a trained photographer as well. All images were kept with his handwritten notes on each step of the restoration. His contention at the time was that the human eye could perceive details that would not necessarily be captured by conventional photography. He asked me to prepare a drawing that would capture the details. His instructions to me were to “draw what you see.” We had no discussion concerning what elements made up the coat of arms or what their meaning was. Pressly states in footnote 27 that “The drawing made by Lisa Oehrl (Fig. 5) appears to be inaccurate in one of the details.” He goes on to state that the tips of the cross were drawn as cross botonée, i.e., rounded tips, whereas the arms of Sir Hugh Hamersley contain the cross crosslet finché, i.e., squared tips. I can affirm with all certainty that I did not make a mistake in copying this detail. I recall how the brush strokes in yellow formed the curves of the tips. Even in the photographic reproduction in Figure 4 of the paper, this detail is visible and verifies my drawing. At the time Pressly’s paper was written, I was never contacted to verify this detail.

In 2002, an article was published in *Shakespeare Matters* which included a more in-depth discussion of the coat of arms depicted on the portrait. Peter Michaels did not discuss with me any conversation he had with anyone about the painting, so I cannot comment on what has been written about this. As to the question of where the drawing by Michaels himself could be, such a drawing never existed. As an employee of his, any work I did was billed as hours to the client under his name. When the worksheet for the painting states hours, those hours could have been for anyone on the staff.

The other question in Burris’ article is the lettering on the scroll below the crest. Again, I emphasize that I was not a party to any discussion about the crest nor was I directed by Michaels to add or ignore anything in composing my drawing. I was there when the cleaning was done and can testify that Michaels did not add any details, nor did anyone else on the staff. The letters I

drew were what I saw. How close these details match those of the Hamersley coat of arms, I have no opinion. It was never suggested to me that the three figures on the shield were of any particular creature. I drew them as rams heads because that is what they looked like to me.

Thank you for the opportunity to rebut the statements about me, the late Peter Michaels and our work. Definitely the painting is a mystery and perhaps one day it will be solved.

Lisa Oehrl Dean, PhD

In response to Lisa Oehrl’s letter about her sketch of the coat of arms in the Ashbourne portrait, let me make the following basic points and refer the reader to my articles in the Spring and Fall 2002 issues of *Shakespeare Matters* [editor’s note: those issues are available on the SOF website].

The coat of arms is the foundation for the case the Folger Library made for Hugh Hamersley as the sitter. It is the major area of alterations that were made to the portrait. It is a murky area because of the extent of alterations, but much of what was originally there can be unraveled. The case for Oxford in no way depends on the coat of arms; it lies in the costume dating, the costume itself, the painting’s provenance and other factors. With that said, I’ll respond, not unfavorably, to Oehrl’s comments. Basically, I think she did “draw what she saw.”

I found only one document in the files regarding Peter Michaels’ requests for payment from the Folger. There must be more. In that document, Michaels requested payment for three hours work for a full drawing of the coat of arms, among other work. I had previously assumed that Michaels himself made a drawing of the coat of arms, which was missing from the file; but from Oehrl’s letter it now appears that her sketch is the one referenced in the request for payment.

More importantly, Michaels asserted strongly there was no lettering on the motto scroll—this he asserted from the X-rays—and I presume this was because he recognized this lettering from Hamersley’s motto was a phony addition later. From the fact that he considered it unethical to cover over original paint (on the coat of arms) and resisted doing so, I do not think he would have put the crucial lettering on the motto scroll that “led” the Folger staff (and Oxfordian Gordon Cyr) to the Hamersley identification.

I think Lisa Oehrl drew a sketch of the altered coat of arms she was shown—with two things I take exception to.

The gold beaks show the head were birds, but the alterations (and perhaps the influence of David Pressly suggesting that they were rams heads) could easily have affected her perceptions. The big “belly” on the griffin at the top was left out, making it look more like the griffin on the top of the 1911 Ducat Hamersley arms (this “belly” is important for uncovering what was really on the crest). There was some faint outline, clearly added, of part of the letters of “MORE” to the altered arms—the Hamersley motto (or did this motto also only come later in the 1911 changed Hamersley arms?). It does not show on the Haberdasher portrait of Hamersley. That portrait shows only a shield with very different rams heads, which was not uncommon at the time even for a man of Hamersley’s status.

In fact, the altered arms have much in common with the 1911 Ducat Hamersley arms because the alterers were unaware of the Haberdasher portrait arms, whose rams heads are totally different and which has no crest.

As far as Pressly’s criticism that Oehrl made an error in drawing the cross that the griffin was holding (clearly an addition taken from the 1911 arms), I think that was due to the error of the alterers, not Oehrl. That was what she saw; the circles on it are clear in the painting.

The fact that Oehrl sketched in the earl’s helmet correctly shows she was working mostly with what she saw.

So, I don’t have many problems with Oehrl’s sketch—the main problems are with the dishonesty of those who altered the portrait and the coat of arms.

Barbara Burris

The analysis of Oxfordian cryptographs by Michael Morse, presented at the SARC Conference in April and summarized by Howard Schumann in the most recent issue of the newsletter (Spring 2014) is interesting, but lacks important information. Morse’s facetious demonstration of “Winnie the Pooh” to discredit the methods of present investigators lacks any meaningful context that would enlighten us about Shakespeare.

Of the five cryptographers Morse mentions—Robert Prechter, Jr., Peter Sturrock, Jonathan Bond, D.L. Roper and myself—only two perceive the kind of context that the Friedmanns consider essential for validation: some purpose that would be understood by the sender and the recipient(s) of the hidden message. Bond and I both propose that the Sonnets dedication was written by Edward de Vere (as Oxford/Shakespeare) to honor Henry Wriothesley. Building upon the discovery of John Rollett, Bond clearly understands the purpose of the dedication and even pictures Oxford making the puzzle from letters written on scraps of paper. He assumes that the initials “T.T.” were added later by the publisher,

Thomas Thorpe; however, those initials are not part of the puzzle. My work concurs with Bond’s but notes additional symbolism—the supposed “initials” are actually Greek gammas, which symbolize the pillars of the temple of Solomon, sacred to Rosicrucians like Francis Bacon and to Freemasons like the Herbert brothers, who sponsored the First Folio.

That realization gives us a clue as to the intended recipients of the message—not only “Mr. W.H.” (Henry Wriothesley) but also those “eyes not yet created,” who will solve the puzzle “when all the breathers of this world are dead” as mentioned in Sonnet 81. Those eyes (of future generations) would need to comprehend the symbolism of the pillars of Solomon’s temple, the twenty-eight dots, the triangular shapes forming 6-2-4 patterns, and the kinds of codes and cipher systems available in the oppressive milieu of Elizabethan England.

Oxford used steganography (a message hidden in a plain text that seems innocuous) and acrostics along with a boustrophedon cipher system that can be read bidirectionally. Oxford knew that the Cardano grille was widely used by Elizabeth’s spies and censors, so he employed a more inventive method than an equidistant letter sequence. But his system does follow a definite pattern—it is not random. In fact, it is quite ingenious when you see the amount of information packed within twenty-eight words. The odds are astronomical that all these names and mottos could be found by chance in this small compass.

I hope Oxfordians interested in this issue will pay close attention to the work of Jonathan Bond in *The De Vere Code*, will note D.L. Roper’s explanation of boustrophedon and his brilliant identification of the Rival Poet in his book *Proving Shakespeare*, and will download an e-book (or buy a used copy) of my 2008 book, *The Secret Love Story in Shakespeare’s Sonnets*.

I am writing a chapter for my next book that includes an analysis of the attempts to solve the puzzle of the Dedication.

Helen Heightsman Gordon, MA, EdD
Professor of English emeritus

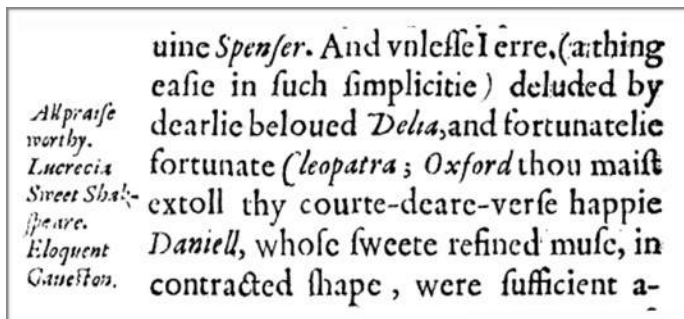
The previous issue (Spring 2014) contains an account of a paper by Michael Morse entitled: “A Critique of Oxfordian Cryptographic Analysis: Falsifiability, the Non-Exclusivity Problem, and the Seductive Allure of Fictive Ontologies.” It was delivered at Concordia’s 18th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, which I was unable to attend. May I take this opportunity to respond to the summary?

I had written (http://www.deveresociety.co.uk/pdf/Waugh_Secret.pdf; see also *Shakespeare Matters*,

Fall 2013, p. 5) that “courte-deare-verse,” which aligns to the marginal note “Sweet Shak-speare” in Covell’s *Polimantia* (1595), was a “unique contrivance.” It was one of many reasons that I became suspicious that Covell had planted word puzzles into this passage. Morse responded: “this is simply not the case.” He is wrong. It is “unique” because it had never been used before. William Covell invented it and it is a “contrivance” because it is a new-fangled, triple-barreled construction comprising noun-adjective-noun to form an adjectival epithet. Covell uses other hyphenated epithets (e.g., “hate-working gold”; “prince-killing Judith”), but nowhere does he attempt the same “unique” construction that we find in “courte-deare-verse,” nor does he, or any other writer, use “courte-deare-verse” in any other context. If Morse is so confident that “courte-deare-verse” is not a “unique contrivance” he should cite other examples of its use. I suspect we shall be waiting a very long time unless, by calling his bluff, this letter inspires him to get a move on.

In his paper Morse also appears to have criticized the anagram “our de Vere - a secret” that is obtained from the letters of “courte-deare-verse,” by suggesting that “the anagrammatized text lends itself to a host of other anagrams, each as plausibly valid as Waugh’s.” Again I take issue, this time on several counts. If Morse were to look up “anagram” in a dictionary he would discover that “our de Vere” is not, strictly speaking, an anagram at all, since all the words and letters appear in the same order as they are found in “courte-deare-verse.” I do not know the correct term for such a device, but we come across it from time to time in Jacobethan literature where it is generally used to obscure names. Think, for instance, of “For *Greive-ill*, paine, forlorne estate” and “Whose grievous case was such DY ERE thou let his name be known”—two lines barely concealing the names of Fulke Greville and Edward Dyer—neither of which would qualify as an anagram. “Our de Vere” is the same. So the only part of “courte-deare-verse” that can legitimately be labeled an anagram is “a secret.” Even Stanley Wells seemed to accept this.

That other anagrams can be drawn from the letters of “a secret” (or, if Morse insists, from the whole of “courte-deare-verse”) is not denied, but are any of them really as “plausibly valid” as “our de Vere - a secret”? In four hundred years no one has yet attempted to explain the relevance of the marginal note “Sweet Shak-speare” to the text beside which it has been so precisely and conspicuously set. Wells has written of this passage that “[Covell] was deliberately being cryptic...but I have no solution to the puzzles he poses.” The Oxfordian solution appears to corroborate a theory about which hundreds of books and thousands of papers have been written since the 1920s (coincidence?); the words “a secret” make sense because they connect a real name to a supposed pseudonym (coincidence?); “De Vere” makes sense because it is the surname of Edward de Vere, the



court poet who is known to have suppressed his name and who is believed by many to have used the pseudonym “Shakespeare” (coincidence?); the word “our” makes sense because in this passage “England” is addressing the two universities and the Inns of Court, and “our” de Vere was Lord Great Chamberlain of England who had attended Cambridge University, the Inns of Court and was honored by Oxford University (coincidence?); the pun on “Oxford” makes sense because “our de Vere” was 17th Earl of Oxford (coincidence?)

How many supporting coincidences are really needed before people can haul themselves beyond the point of saying: “but you can always make a different anagram out of that”? I would urge Morse to supply, as quickly as possible, his list of alternative anagrams complete with supporting coincidences and reasons for deciding why each is “just as plausible” as “our de Vere - a secret.” He must also provide the citations of the other uses of “courte-deare-verse” that he claims to have discovered, which would prevent Covell’s usage from qualifying as a “unique contrivance.” Then we shall be in the truth-deare-knowledge happie position to critique the validity of his critique.

Alexander Waugh

[Editor’s note: Michael Morse intends to respond to the above two letters in the Fall issue of this newsletter.]



Research Grant Update

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grant Program was announced in the Spring 2014 issue of this newsletter. Thanks to the rapid and generous response of members, just under \$10,000 in contributions was received; that amount will be matched with funds from the SOF endowment. Grant proposals, which were due at the end of August, are now being evaluated, and grant awards will be announced in the Fall issue.

What's the News?

“Authorship Appeal” to Be Heard in Stratford, Ontario

The Stratford Festival in Stratford, Ontario, has announced that a special panel of judges, chaired by Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin of the Supreme Court of Canada, will convene “to consider whether there is sufficient evidence to refute the claim that Shakespeare was the principal author of the canon.” The event will take place on Saturday, October 4, from 10:30 AM to noon in the Festival Theatre. Admission is free, and the event will be live streamed. We are informed that a number of people are already at work to help make sure that the views of authorship doubters are fairly represented. We expect to have a full report on this potentially exciting event in the Fall 2014 issue.

Is Hillary Clinton an Authorship Doubter?

In the Spring 2014 issue we reported that former U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens again showed his interest in the Shakespeare Authorship Question when, in a Q&A published in the *New York Times* Sunday Book Review, he referred three times to “the author of the Shakespeare canon” and the works “attributed to William Shakespeare.” Now it seems that Hillary Clinton has followed suit. In June, the former First Lady and former Secretary of State (and author of the new book *Hard Choices*) was asked the same general set of questions about her reading habits. In response to the stock question, “You’re hosting a literary dinner party. Which three writers are invited?” Clinton said, “I’d choose to have one guest for a long discussion: William Shakespeare. I’m curious to see who would show up and what he really wrote.” If Hillary Clinton becomes a candidate for President in 2016, it will be interesting to see if this statement draws any further attention.

Shakespeare Knew Greek?

The notion that Shakespeare may actually have known Greek is apparently being re-examined in mainstream academia. On July 14, 2014, the Center for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies at the University of York (UK) sponsored a daylong colloquium on “Greek texts and the Early Modern Stage” to explore the impact of ancient Greek writers on Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The online description notes that “Greek

provokes strong associations for a number of reasons: its controversial associations with Erasmus, Protestantism, and heresy; the specter of democratic governance; the rebirth of interest in Galenic medicine; the pervasive influence of Greek culture on Latin literature; and the identification of Greece with the origins of theatre.” In the abstract of her paper, “*Hamlet* and the Ghost of Sophocles,” Sarah Dewar-Watson claims that the verbal echoes of Sophocles’ *Antigone* in *Hamlet* suggest Shakespeare was familiar with the anthology of seven Greek plays, *Tragediae selectae Aeschyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis*, published in Paris in 1567 which included dual-language Latin translations of George Ratallier’s *Antigone*, Erasmus’ *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and George Buchanan’s *Alceste*. Dewar-Watson previously published “The *Alceste* and the Statue scene in *The Winter’s Tale*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60 (2009), which argued that Shakespeare employed Buchanan’s translation as a primary source for the statue scene.

Thanks to Earl Showerman for passing along this information. But wait a minute—didn’t Ben Jonson tell us that the Bard knew small Latin and less Greek? Are we to believe that Ben Jonson was being duplicitous? What will be next—some crazy notion that Shakespeare may actually have traveled to Italy?

“Shakespeare on the Road”—SBT’s Paul Edmondson Dispenses Relics in North America

As this note is being written, a group of notable Stratfordians is traipsing through the United States and Canada, intending to visit some three dozen Shakespeare festivals over sixty days. The project, called “Shakespeare on the Road,” is funded by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the University of Warwick and Misfit, Inc. It is headed by Paul Edmondson of the SBT.

At each stop, Edmondson presents the local festival or theater company with a special plaque made from – we are not making this up – “a cedar tree that used to grow in the garden of Shakespeare’s Birthplace.” Presumably, Edmondson doesn’t try to convince the recipients that the cedar tree actually dated from Shakespeare’s time; after all, his official title at the SBT is Head of Research and Knowledge.

Genius: Hard Work or Heredity?

The online edition of *Psychology Today* recently featured a guest post that touched on the Shakespeare Authorship Question. On July 18, Stuart Ritchie, a research fellow at the University of Edinburgh, posted “Shakespeare, Vermeer, and the ‘Secrets’ of Genius.” In it he argues that “Genius is under sustained attack,” and takes issue (as do many psychologists) with the notion popularized by Malcolm Gladwell and others that what some call “genius” is really the fruit of hard work—the so-called “10,000-hour” theory of genius. Ritchie chose to discuss two “historical theories that claim to show that what we once thought was unassailable genius may have been something else entirely.”

His first subject was the Shakespeare Authorship Question, which Ritchie fairly summarizes in two paragraphs, recognizing that Edward de Vere has emerged as the leading alternative candidate. He then blithely states that “It is not my intention to debunk these improbable fictions, which are entirely without merit,” and refers readers to Jonathan Shapiro’s *Contested Will* and Wells & Edmondson’s *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, “where it is demonstrated convincingly that a great deal of evidence links William Shakespeare to the folios of plays and poems that bore his name, and that he was educated, with access to all the information and knowledge he required.” Ritchie can’t resist a gratuitous dig at the names of certain authorship questioners (Looney, Battey and Silliman—nudge, nudge). Ritchie announces that he agrees with those who maintain that doubting Will of Stratford “betrays an impoverished view of human creativity. The idea that direct autobiographical experience, as opposed to imagination, is necessary to write about Venice, or pirates, or romantic travails, is not only a modern notion— unheard of in Shakespeare’s day—but also devalues Shakespeare’s genius.”

Ritchie’s second subject is the recent theory offered by David Hockney and Charles Falco (and others, including Philip Steadman) that the relatively sudden leap in realism in Renaissance art was accomplished by artists making use of lenses and mirrors in creating their paintings. According to this theory, the leading practitioner was Johannes Vermeer, “whose small oeuvre achieves an uncanny photorealism seen in few previous works,” Ritchie writes. Ritchie correctly asks, where’s the evidence. And it’s true that no documentation exists to corroborate the Hockney-Falco thesis; the artists said nothing about it, nor, as far as we know, did their subjects or apprentices. Ritchie also notes that “Hockney-Falco theorists are swift to point out that they don’t see their thesis as a diminution of” genius, but nevertheless Ritchie disagrees.

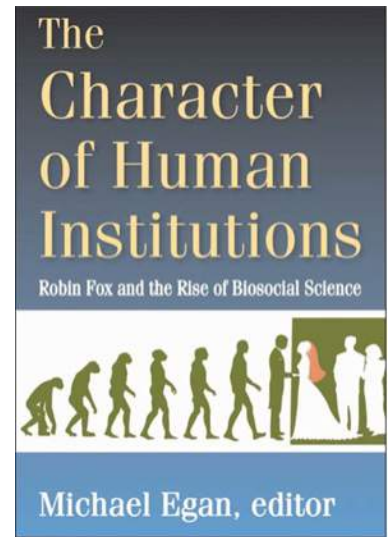
He follows with a summary of recent findings on “genius” by various psychologists which suggest—to him, anyway—“a clear swing of the proverbial pendulum away from ‘10,000 hours’ and back towards ‘hereditary genius.’” He discusses two recent papers which show that musical talent may be linked more to genetic factors (including personality and intelligence) than to practice. In his conclusion, Ritchie states that “the psychological literature shows that to write off genius as only experience, trickery, or hard graft is to miss the critical—though still largely mysterious—contribution of innate talent, acting via one’s genetic endowment, to create achievement.”

New Book Celebrates Life and Work of Robin Fox

Transaction Publishers, a leading publisher and distributor of social science books, has recently published a work that may be of interest to Oxfordians for more than one reason. *The Character of Human Institutions: Robin Fox and the Rise of Biosocial Science*, celebrates the life and work of Robin Fox, noted social anthropologist and a pioneer in the development of biosocial science. It should be of interest because Fox is an Oxfordian, and because the book is edited by Dr. Michael Egan, himself an Oxfordian (as well as former editor of this newsletter and current editor of *The Oxfordian*).

Aptly described in one review as a polymath, Robin Fox has spoken at previous authorship conferences on several topics, including the English grammar school as it existed in Shakespeare’s time. He has written on subjects as diverse as kinship, the Bible, the brain, evolution, and the history of ideas.

The Character of Human Institutions is a collection of seventeen essays from sixteen contributors (including one from Fox himself), supplemented by a foreword from Robert Trivers and an introduction from Michael Egan. The book is available directly from the publisher (www.transactionpub.com) or from other retail outlets such as amazon.com.



Greenblatt Blasted for *The Swerve*

As we also noted in the Spring 2014 issue, Harvard Professor Stephen Greenblatt commented in response to the *New York Times* Sunday Book Review Q&A with Justice John Paul Stevens that the notion that “Shakespeare didn’t write Shakespeare” was ridiculous. Greenblatt’s 2004 book, *Will in the World* (one hesitates to call it a biography; “imaginography” is more apt), sold well and was widely hailed. Similarly, his 2011 book, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*, was widely praised, winning the 2011 National Book Award for Nonfiction and the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction.

However, not everyone was captivated by *The Swerve*. We recently saw an online reprint of a lengthy criticism by Jim Hinch of the book and of the author’s methods: “Why Stephen Greenblatt Is Wrong – And Why It Matters,” which appeared in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* on December 1, 2012. Hinch doesn’t mince words in his 3500-word critique. “Simply put,” he states, “*The Swerve* did not deserve the awards it received because it is filled with factual inaccuracies and founded upon a view of history not shared by serious scholars of the periods Greenblatt studies. That such a book could win two of America’s highest literary honors suggests something doesn’t work in the awards system itself.”

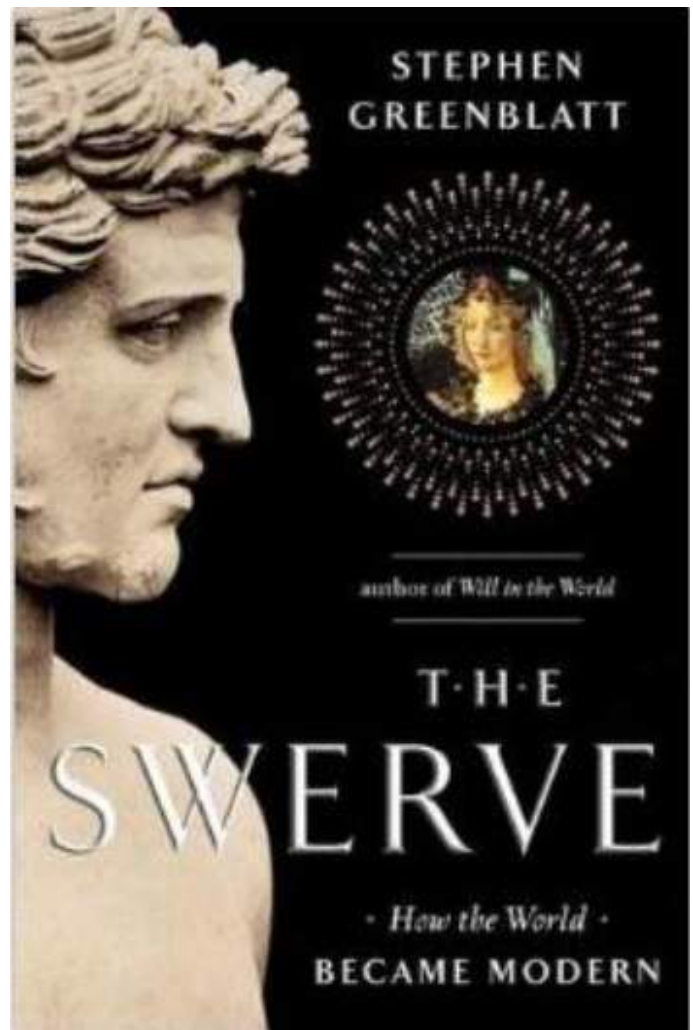
The gist of *The Swerve* is that a first-century (BCE) poem, *De Rerum Natura*, by the Epicurean philosopher Lucretius, was rediscovered in 1417 in Florence, Italy, and that its rediscovery played an important part in the development of secular culture in the West. Central to Greenblatt’s thesis is his characterization of the Dark Ages and Early Middle Ages as a time of cultural bankruptcy, with no interest in books, education, or even the pursuit of happiness. However, as Hinch writes, “Greenblatt’s vision is not true, not even remotely,” noting that other critics called Greenblatt’s vision “at best ‘questionable,’ and at worst ‘unwarranted.’” Hinch points out that in Europe in the centuries after the fall of Rome, books were “accorded near totemic authority,” and that “it is simply untrue to assert that classical culture was ever lost, ignored or suppressed during the Middle Ages.” As for Lucretius himself, he had not been forgotten; on the contrary, scholars have “long detected ‘Lucretian influence’” dating back to the ninth century CE.

Hinch takes particular issue with *The Swerve*’s lengthy discussion of the medieval practice of self-flagellation. Greenblatt writes that “a vast body of evidence confirms that” the practice was widespread. However, as Hinch points out, “A check of the endnotes shows that Greenblatt cites no such ‘vast body of evidence’ . . . There is no evidence because self-flagellation was not widespread in the Middle Ages. . . . In fact medieval monasteries were among the least

religious and most worldly institutions of their time.” Hinch is baffled by Greenblatt’s further claim that “such asceticism represented ‘the core values of all believing Christians’ of the Middle Ages. In fact no serious scholar would claim to know what ‘the core values . . .’ were . . . because historical sources never yield enough unambiguous information to make such overstated claims. And yet it is here, where his evidence is weakest, that Greenblatt lays most stress in his argument.” Elsewhere, citing Greenblatt’s response to another critic that “I am of the devil’s party that believes that something significant happened in the Renaissance,” Hinch counters: “That’s marvelous. But it doesn’t give Greenblatt the right to make stuff up.”

Jim Hinch’s full article may be found on the *Los Angeles Review of Books* web site:

<http://lareviewofbooks.org/review/why-stephen-greenblatt-is-wrong-and-why-it-matters>.



Did Greenblatt swerve too far?

Waugaman Published in One Mainstream Journal, Rejected by Another

Richard Waugaman informs us that he has been published in a mainstream academic journal and turned down, after initial approval, by another. First, the good news. His note, “The 1574 *Mirour for Magistrates* Is a Possible Source of ‘Feath’red King’ in Shakespeare’s ‘The Phoenix and the Turtle,’” appears in the Spring 2014 edition (vol. 85) of *Cahiers Élisabéthains*. In his note, Waugaman suggests that Shakespeare’s poem (published in the 1601 collection, *Love’s Martyr*) alludes to the 1574 edition of *Mirour*, which contains, in a poem spoken by Lear’s daughter Cordelia, “fethered king.” That phrase appears nowhere else in EEBO (Early English Books Online). Waugaman expresses agreement with those who argue that *Love’s Martyr*, which refers to itself as an allegory, is about the death of Essex and is anti-Cecil. He cites historian Paul Hammer, who argues that our image of the Essex Rebellion is viewed as Robert Cecil wanted it to be viewed—as treason—when in fact Essex always maintained that he was only trying to protect Queen Elizabeth. Waugaman suggests that *Love’s Martyr* was not actually published in 1601, and may have been published after Elizabeth’s death (its existence is known by 1606). If it was published after 1603, “The Phoenix and the Turtle” expresses Shakespeare’s grief at Elizabeth’s death. In an endnote Waugaman suggests that the “Ignoto” poems in *Love’s Martyr* may also be by Shakespeare. The biographical note states that Waugaman has written some “sixty [articles] on Shakespeare and on pseudonymous authorship.”

Cahiers Élisabéthains: A Biannual Journal of English Renaissance Studies was founded in 1972. The peer reviewed journal focuses on the English literary Renaissance. It is produced by the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in conjunction with the Institute for Research on the Renaissance, the Neo-Classical Age and the Enlightenment (IRCL). As of 2014 it is published by Manchester University Press on behalf of CNRS and IRCL. Among the members of its advisory board are noted Stratfordians Jonathan Bate and Stanley Wells.

The not-so-good, but not terribly surprising, news is that the new editors of a second journal reversed a decision by the prior editors accepting a chapter-length contribution from Dr. Waugaman. In January 2014 Waugaman was informed by the then editors of *Memoria di Shakespeare, A Journal of Shakespeare Studies*, Luciana Pirè and Maria Valentini, that an article he had written (“The Psychology of Shakespeare Biographers,” originally published in *Brief Chronicles* vol. I [2009]) was “absolutely pertinent to our forthcoming issue on ‘Shakespearian biography’” and that they “would be delighted” to run that article or “something new” along the same lines if he preferred. Waugaman elected to

revise his article. However, Pirè and Valentini were replaced. In August Waugaman was informed by one of the new editors, Rosy Colombo Smith of Sapienza University of Rome, that they had “decided against publishing an article that has come out already, and so recently,” even though Waugaman had revised it. Further inquiry elicited the real reason for the reversal. Waugaman received a sneering email from the other new editor, Gary Taylor (now of Florida State University), informing him that the “change is due to my own involvement in the volume,” which was “conditional on rejection of certain contributions, like yours, which seem to me profoundly unscholarly. . . . I simply find your reasoning, and your evidence, as unconvincing as those of Holocaust deniers, and other conspiracy theorists. . . . [T]he previous co-editors. . . were themselves guilty of a breach of good faith, in committing the journal to positions conflicted with the intentions and desires of the journal’s founders.”

Not one to turn the other cheek, Waugaman promptly responded to Taylor’s bombast, sarcastically thanking him for “spar[ing] me the embarrassment of having” such a “profoundly unscholarly” article published, and imploring him not to demand the resignations of editors of other journals which have accepted his submissions (including *Notes & Queries*, *The Renaissance Quarterly* and *Cahiers Élisabéthains*). Waugaman continued: “I do fully understand your concern that publishing my article might undermine the credibility of other—Stratfordian—contributions to the volume. In fact, that was precisely my intent—to undermine the status and credibility of all Stratfordians. You were quite perceptive to recognize this.” Finally, Waugaman took note of Taylor’s grossly offensive comparison of authorship doubters to Holocaust deniers. He informed Taylor that eminent Stratfordians Stephen Greenblatt and Jonathan Bate have apologized for making similar remarks, and added, “I can only assume that your emotions have overridden your common decency.”

“*Hamlet* and the Law of Homicide” at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC

Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship First Vice President Tom Regnier gave a presentation on “*Hamlet* and the Law of Homicide: the Life of the Mind in Law and Art” at the [Cosmos Club](#) in Washington, DC, on June 27. The Cosmos Club is a private social club, founded in 1878. Since its founding, it has elected as members individuals in virtually every profession that has anything to do with scholarship, creative genius or intellectual distinction. Over the years, many members have received Nobel Prizes, Pulitzer Prizes, and other accolades. The Cosmos Club puts on a variety of lectures to meet the interests of

its diverse membership. Tom's talk was sponsored by the Shakespeare Group and the Legal Affairs Group.

Tom demonstrated in his talk that the author of *Hamlet* was aware of changes that were occurring in the law in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, particularly the evolution away from the medieval view of criminal responsibility, which focused entirely on a person's actions, to the modern view, which also takes into account a person's state of mind. Tom pointed out that this development paralleled what was happening in Shakespeare's art: a greater emphasis on the inner life of the character than was seen in earlier literature. One attendee said it was one of the two best talks he had heard at our monthly meetings in the past ten years. Tom succinctly summarized a wealth of information about the history of English law as it relates to *Hamlet*. His presentation blended the best of scholarship and humor, keeping the audience fully engaged. In the Q&A discussion that followed, Tom and the audience members discussed legal issues in such plays as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Henry V*.

Because the powers-that-be at the Cosmos Club are resistant to discussion of the Shakespeare authorship question, Tom's half-hour presentation did not directly address it, other than to demonstrate Shakespeare's deep understanding of the law. During the Q&A period, however, the second person to speak said he was a new member, and an attorney. He said he did not know if we allowed discussion of the authorship question, but said he was an Oxfordian. He asked Tom if he thought that the author of Shakespeare's plays had to have had legal training. Tom replied that, after teaching a law school course on Shakespeare and the Law, he believed that this had to be the case.

No, this was not a plant! Even though several of us who are active in our Shakespeare Group are post-Stratfordians, and even though this "Oxfreudian" is former Chair of the group, and now serves on its advisory committee, some outspoken Stratfordians in the Club have done their best to ban any discussion of the authorship question. I'd briefed Tom on this, so he assiduously avoided the slightest mention of it during his formal presentation. *Sed res ipse loquitur!* (Or, Englished: but the facts speak for themselves.)

A prominent Stratfordian in attendance suggested that Shakspeare could have learned all he needed to know about the law from contact with attorneys who were in the audience when plays were performed at the Inns of Court. Recalling Tom's reference to Portia's speech on the quality of mercy, the Oxfordians in the audience were too merciful to ridicule this desperate rationalization.

Oxfordians Roger Stritmatter and Shelly Maycock attended as my guests. Roger made some pertinent points. Someone asked if Caroline Spurgeon cited the legal imagery in Shakespeare's work in her fine book, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. Roger said that she downplayed it, since her book was written in an

effort to disprove the Baconian authorship theory, so she had no desire to demonstrate Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of the law.

Tom commented afterwards: "It was an honor to speak at the Cosmos Club on a subject that I always enjoy sharing with audiences. The club members who attended were a wonderful audience—totally attentive and appreciative. They asked many good questions after my talk and we had a wonderful exchange of ideas. Many thanks to Rick Waugaman and the Cosmos Club for inviting me."

- Contributed by Richard Waugaman

Patricia Carroll Ann Brown (1931-2014)

It is with regret we note the recent death of a staunch Oxfordian from the Toronto area. Patricia Carroll Ann "Patty" Brown passed away on July 2, 2014.

Educated at Columbia University, the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, George Brown College, Barnard College and York University, Patty devoted her life and professional career to the theater.

As the Toronto Star noted, "she excelled at all levels of theatre including acting, directing and playwriting." At her death she left behind an unfinished script about the life of Edward de Vere, "whom she was convinced [had] written the plays ascribed to Shakespeare." At her request, there was no funeral or memorial.

April London Authorship Debate Fills the Pub

On April 30, 2014, the Central London Debating Society sponsored a Shakespeare Authorship Debate at Ye Olde Cocke Tavern in Fleet Street. Representing authorship doubters were William Leahy of Brunel University, Ros Barber, author of *The Marlowe Papers* and *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, and Alexander Waugh, co-editor of *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* Representing the traditional view were Alan Nelson, professor emeritus at UC Berkeley (and author of *Monstrous Adversary*), and Duncan Salkeld of Chichester University. Each speaker was limited to five minutes, so obviously there wasn't time for anyone to make a detailed case in support of their position.

Nevertheless, as reported in the *De Vere Society Newsletter*, Alan Nelson chose to devote some of his five minutes to attacking anti-Stratfordian actors Derek Jacobi and Mark Rylance for rejecting "their glorious theatrical tradition of English drama," before moving on to familiar arguments that any variations in the spelling of Shaksper/Shaxper/Shakespeare should be ignored, that posthumous evidence of authorship should be accepted, and that there were many contemporary references to Shakespeare as author. Leahy pointed out that what is known about the Stratford man—real estate transactions, lawsuits, grain hoarding, etc.—has no connection to a

literary life. Barber attacked the frequent misrepresentations of the non-Stratfordian position made by traditionalists; she also stressed that authorship doubters still love and appreciate the works, and should not be castigated as "anti-Shakespearean," as Stanley Wells of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust would prefer to call anyone who dares question the orthodox view. Salkeld launched his presentation with a feeble joke before discussing the "incontrovertible" evidence of authorship such as the 1595 Revels Accounts payment to Shaksper, and the fact (at least he thinks it's fact) that Shaksper and printer Richard Field were friends. Waugh, the final speaker, used most of his time to refute the arguments of Nelson and Salkeld.

Also as reported in the *De Vere Society Newsletter*, Heward Wilkinson noted there was a lively Q&A after the debate, during which Alan Nelson opined that "he could not see that there would be the slightest problem about Oxford publishing *Hamlet* under his own name," to which Waugh asked, "Have you read *Hamlet*?" Another blogger who attended wrote that Salkeld and Nelson at times seemed "in need of a crib-sheet," and that by the end of the evening almost everyone was willing "to concede that the Shakespeare Authorship Question deserves to be studied in schools and universities."



Join Us at the 2014 SOF Conference

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

The event will take place at the Overture Center in downtown Madison. This year's presenters will include: Julie Bianchi, Bonner Cutting, Michael Delahoyde, Newton Frohlich, Ron Halstead, Ron Hess, Wally Hurst, Ramon Jiménez, Shelly Maycock, James McGrath, James Norwood, Tom Regnier, Don Rubin, John Shahan, Earl Showerman, Roger Stritmatter, Linda Theil, James Warren, Alexander Waugh, Hanno Wember (delivering a paper by Robert Detobel), Hank Whitemore and Heward Wilkinson. The program also includes the premiere of filmmaker Cheryl Eagan-Donovan's *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*. Conference goers will also have the option to attend a special Renaissance feast and a production of *Much Ado About Nothing* in nearby Spring Green.

It may not be too late to register! For details, go to:

<http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2014-conference/>.

We will, of course, have a full report on the Conference in the Fall issue of this Newsletter.

(Shakespeare's Perspective Art, cont. from p.1)

Shakespeare mentions by name in the canon, Giulio Romano (*The Winter's Tale* 5.2.95-100). For example, the ceiling of the Sala di Psyche (1526-28) in the Gonzagas' Palazzo Te in Mantua features a *trompe l'oeil* effect, whereby from the perspective of viewers below it seems as if we're peering into the sky, up and beyond the legs of the gods and the clouds on which they stand [Figure 2].

Similarly, we look up as if through an opening in the ceiling of the Stanza dei Sole (1526) in the Gonzagas' Palazzo Ducale to see horses and drivers responsible for the arcs of the sun and the moon. In the Palazzo Te's Camera degli Sposi (1465-74), again from the appropriate perspective of viewers below, we see the illusion of a dome, opening to the sky beyond the playing cherubs. The ceiling of Sant Ignazio is from the 1600s, past Shakespeare's time, but perspective art was obviously heading in this direction and, except when Vasari mentions examples that have since been destroyed, we don't know what we've lost. The Sant Ignazio ceiling offers a breathtaking faux 3-D effect [Figure 3]. Realize that if you were standing on scaffolding near the actual ceiling, the figures would be distorted—in some places elongated, in some places squashed; but from the perspective below they seem to be levitating.



Figure 2

A closely related subcategory of Op Art is named "anamorphosis," from the Greek meaning "formed again." Known as "perspective painting" to the Elizabethans, this kind of image will reveal something hidden when looked at from a different angle (Garber



Figure 3

267). This special effect is clearly Shakespeare's favorite visual art phenomenon. He mentions it near the end of *Twelfth Night* when Duke Orsino speaks for all present in astonishment at seeing the disguised Viola and her brother Sebastian together: "One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons; / A natural perspective, that is, and is not!" (5.1.216-217). Shakespeare directly alludes to perspective tricks in at least three other plays as well. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Egyptian queen calls back the messenger who reported Antony's marriage to her, and says, no doubt partly regarding Antony: "Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon, / The other way's a Mars" (2.5.116-117). This particular trick one can still see in souvenir postcards (as in the 40th anniversary box set of Woodstock, showing a large green field from one angle and the same field packed with hippie concertgoers from another) and Halloween novelty portraits (which look like Victorian gentlemen and ladies initially, but ghouls from a slightly skewed perspective). A grim surviving example from the late 16th century, housed in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, shows Mary Queen of Scots from one side of a pleated or corrugated surface and a death's head from the other [Figure 4]. A lost Nicholas Hilliard work is recorded in the 1590 Nonesuch inventory: "A table [panel] on the conyng p[er]spective of death and a woman, doone by Hilliarde" (Shickman, "Turning" 70). In contemporary art, Patrick Hughes creates interesting Op Art of this kind (<http://www.patrickhughes.co.uk/>). Because of the accordion-like construction, as you walk past his works you will swear that the doors are swinging open or closing, revealing or obscuring the outdoor view.

At the end of *Henry V*, negotiations with the defeated French blur an imperialistic land-grab with the princess Henry insists on marrying: "you may, some of you, thank love for my blindness, who cannot see many a fair French

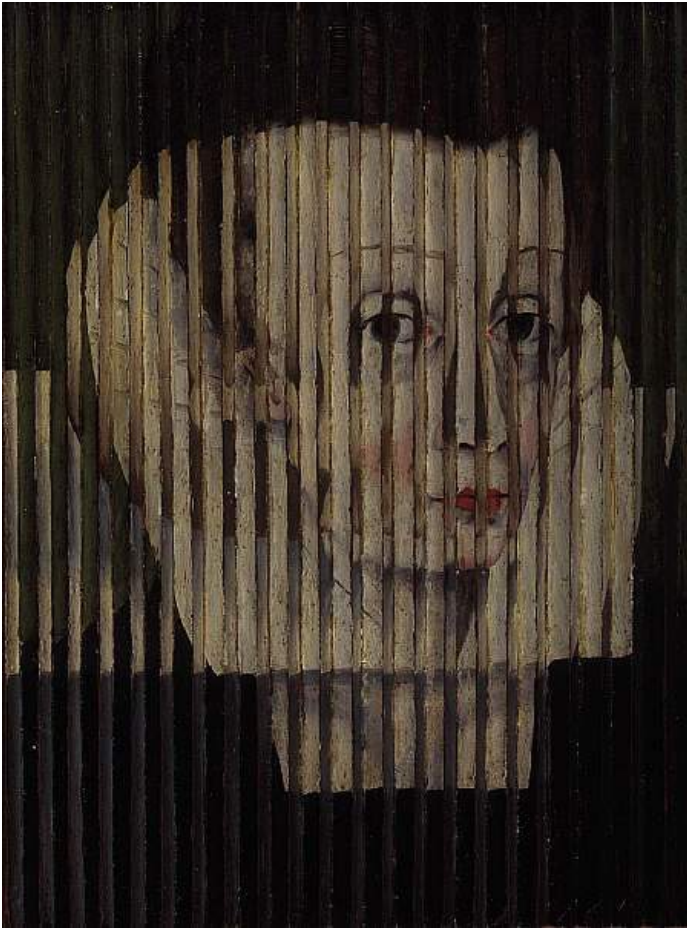


Figure 4

city for one fair French maid that stands in my way.” The French King replies: “Yes, my lord, you see them perspectively: the cities turn’d into a maid; for they are all girdled with maiden walls that war hath never ent’red” (5.2.316-323). Grim political/sexual implications in a deceptively breezy scene.

Sonnet 24 addresses this same matter of perspective in artistic representation:

Mine eye hath play’d the painter and hath steel’d
Thy beauty’s form in table of my heart;
My body is the frame wherein ’tis held,
And perspective it is best painter’s art.
For through the painter must you see his skill....

Although he might have applied this principle to the entire Shakespeare canon, Hank Whittemore notes that “in regard to these sonnets, the ‘best’ art is to see through the surface to what is really being conveyed; perspective must be used to see the most important image or meaning” (Whittemore 177).

It is in *Richard II* that Shakespeare seems to have first struck on the relevance of perspective painting to his own dramatic art and its potential, for while the other mentions seem relatively offhanded, as if Shakespeare has thoroughly absorbed the concept into his encyclopedia of allusions, in *Richard II* he dutifully defines the phenomenon and creates a complex effect one does not see in his clearly earlier history plays. In *Richard II*, courtier and supposed flatterer Bushy tries to help Richard’s young Queen out of her irrational dread and depression by referring to “perspectives, which rightly gaz’d upon / Show nothing but confusion; ey’d awry / Distinguish form” (2.2.18-20). This specific kind of anamorphic art is represented in the 16th century by the elongated portrait of Edward VI (1542) in London’s National Portrait Gallery [Figure 5]. Indeed, only when “ey’d awry” does the image “Distinguish form.”

That time Gulielmus Shaksper was at court playing the Ghost in *Hamlet* and peeking out from behind the arras to see Elizabeth pitching a fit of jealousy that he would later transcribe into *Antony and Cleopatra*, he could-have/would-have/may-have/let-us-imagine seen hanging there the most famous early modern example of perspective painting and anamorphosis: Hans Holbein’s *The Ambassadors* (1533), now in London’s National

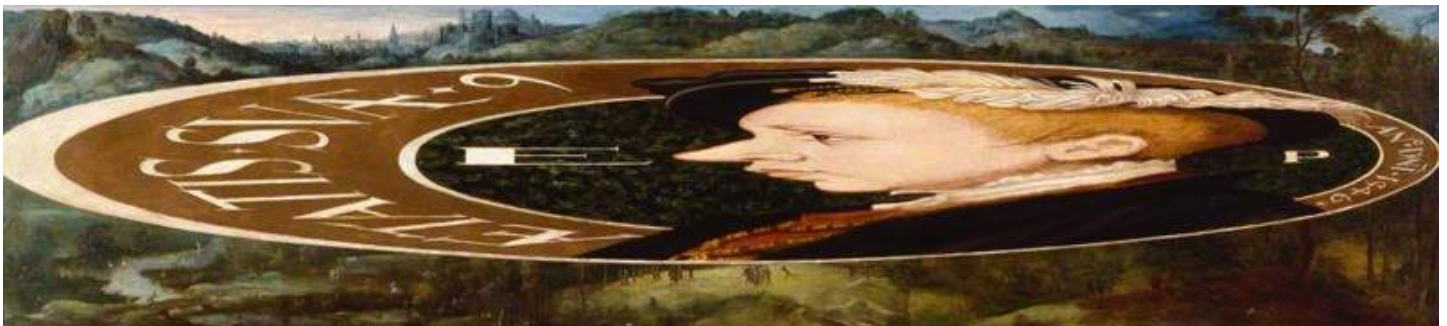


Figure 5

Gallery [Figure 6]. Stephen Greenblatt, in his less embarrassing, more scholarly days described this work:

[The ambassadors] Dinteville and Selve are depicted in the context of the highest hopes and achievements of their age. The objects on the table between them, set off splendidly by the rich Turkish cloth and the exquisite mosaic pavement, represent a mastery of the Quadrivium, that portion of the Seven Liberal Arts comprising Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy, while a mastery of the Trivium—Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric—is implied by the very profession of the two figures. They are thus in possession of the instruments—both literal and symbolic—by which men bring the world into focus, represent it in proper perspective. Indeed, in addition to their significance as emblems of the Liberal Arts, the objects on the table virtually constitute a series of textbook illustrations for a manual on the art of perspective. (Greenblatt 17)



Figure 6

And yet, also in the scene is a “large alien presence that has intruded into this supremely civilized world of human achievement”:

[S]lashing across the pavement, intruding upon these complex harmonies and disrupting them, is the extraordinary anamorphic representation of the death's-head. Viewed frontally, the skull is an unreadable blur in the center foreground of the painting; only from the proper position at the side of the painting is it suddenly revealed. (Greenblatt 18)

Thus, when the work is viewed from an oblique angle, when “ey’d awry,” the “fugitive image” comes into focus (Shickman, “Turning” 67), in this case serving as a *memento mori* or *vanitas* (Garber 266-267).

To see the large death’s-head requires a still more radical abandonment of what we take to be “normal” vision; we must throw the entire painting out of perspective in order to bring into perspective what our usual mode of perception cannot comprehend. (Greenblatt 19)

Naturally, Shakespeare loves this kind of device and the other types of perspective painting, since they represent a method of including extra dimensions in the art form—hidden material revealed when the viewer is prompted to see the same artwork from an altered perspective.

How does this apply to the works of Shakespeare? In *Richard II*, Shakespeare most emphatically draws our attention to the phenomenon of perspective art, alerting us that the playwright is thinking in terms of shifting viewpoints. At the very least, to apply the phenomenon of perspective shifting to *Richard II*, it seems that from one vantage point, Richard is a weak, vain, corrupt king who gets what he deserves; yet from another, especially later in the play, he is a tragic dispossessed figure, Hamlet-like in his exquisite appreciation for pathos and irony, and able to articulate this artistic vision in poetry. Similarly, from one angle Bolingbroke is a strong, wronged hero; yet from another he seems to be a grasping, sanctimonious hypocrite. To some critics, *Richard II* represents a compelling exercise in historical ambiguity.

But Oxfordians have learned perpetually to recognize the play of perspective(s) in what we might call perspective plays. At first, Oxford inhabits the character of Mowbray in the contention with Henry Bolingbroke (Ogburn & Ogburn 430, Farina 113). Reflecting on the banishments, Mowbray laments the loss of immersion in the beloved English language (1.3.159ff): “Within my mouth you have enjail’d my tongue” (1.3.166). But Oxford can also be seen as inhabiting Henry (Ogburn & Ogburn 430), “Though banish’d, yet a true-born Englishman” (1.3.309). However, there are problems with interpreting Henry as Oxford too strictly: Henry has almost no detectable inwardness.

Meanwhile, Queen “Elizabeth was sometimes accused of being over-influenced by favourites, and for this reason was compared with Richard II” (Wells 134). Just before the battle is to begin between Henry and Mowbray, Richard throws down his baton, a signal that all must halt. “The behavior of Richard in allowing the challenges to be taken up, the lists to be engaged, and everything made ready to bring the dispute to a decision, then checking the procedure and banishing both men is pure Elizabeth” (Ogburn & Ogburn 431).

But the elder Ogburns also think that Richard is partly Oxford: “his tendency toward thought rather than action,” the poetic gift, and “something of the morbid bitterness” (436). Mark Anderson agrees: “Shakespeare’s Richard II is actually de Vere through and through—a philosophical poet-king and proto-Hamlet” (Anderson 331).

Such is Oxford’s tricky transposition of the principles of perspective art to his dramatic works. Is Henry V the greatest, most inspiring, national hero, or a heartless, soulless Machiavel? Is *The Taming of the Shrew* finally a sexist validation of male dominance or something much subtler and subversive? Is *The Merchant of Venice* an effective vilifying of a Jew or a dark critique of hypocritical solipsistic Christian capitalism?

Rather than canceling each other out or demonstrating internal contradictions that compromise the validity of Oxfordianism, this multiplicity of interpretations is exactly the intended effect of perspective art. These are not delusions we are imposing on the works. There really is a skull in *The Ambassadors*: Holbein put it there. Reflections of Oxford and Elizabeth really do show up in *Richard II* and in play after play. Shakespeare did put them there and practically told us he was doing it.

No illusion.

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An Overlooked Allusion to *Hamlet* in One of Oxford's Letters

by Robert Detobel

That the relationship between Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and Lord Burghley is partly mirrored in the relationship between Hamlet and Polonius is one of the main arguments for Oxford's authorship of that play and, by inference, of the major part of the Shakespeare canon. For instance, in his letter of 27 April 1576 to Burghley, written just after his return from Italy, Oxford complains that his wife, Anne, is still under the influence of her parents. "Wherefore as your Lordship very well writes unto me that you mean if it stands with my liking to receive her into your house, this is likewise to let your Lordship understand that it doth very well content me, for there as your daughter or her mother's more than my wife you may take comfort of her and I, rid of the cumber thereby shall remain eased of many griefs." In *Hamlet*, Polonius uses Ophelia as a decoy, and in IV.v, after Hamlet has slain Polonius, a gentleman reports that Ophelia speaks much of her father. It is known that Anne was Lord Burghley's darling (see Conyers Read's biography of Burghley). In the play, one of the causes of Hamlet's estrangement from Ophelia has to do with her submissive attitude to her father.

In a letter of September 1572, written less than a month after the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, Oxford implores Burghley, given his pivotal role in the realm, to be heedful of his life. "This estate has depended on you a great while, as all the world doth judge and now are all men's eyes, not being occupied any more on these lost lords [the French noblemen killed on St. Bartholomew's Day], are as it were on a sudden bent on you as a singular hope and pillar whereto the religion has to lean." Similar praise of Burghley was uttered by Francis Bacon in the 1590s. Bacon calls him "the Atlas of the commonwealth" in one letter and *pater patriae* in another (Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth*, New York [1960], 478-479). *Pater patriae*, "father of the fatherland," was the title given to Julius Caesar, and this fact might have led Shakespeare to the choice of the name Polonius. Indeed, in *Julius Caesar* III.i., just before being murdered, Caesar compares himself to the northern star:

I could be well mov'd, if I were as you;
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me;
But I am constant as the northern star,
Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.

"Northern star" and "pole" are synonyms; "pole" may be considered as the root of the name Polonius.

Thus the historical Lord Burghley is linked with the historical Julius Caesar by Shakespeare's likening the latter to the northern star in one play and the former to the Roman northern star or pole in the other.

Shortly before Polonius is slain by Hamlet, the following ominous dialogue takes place between the two men:

Hamlet. My lord, you play'd once i' th' university, you say?

Polonius. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

Hamlet. What did you enact?

Polonius. I did enact Julius Caesar; I was kill'd i' th' Capitol; Brutus kill'd me.

Hamlet. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.

At this juncture in the play the reference to Julius Caesar can hardly be considered as fortuitous, the less so because in Shakespeare's source (be it the *Gesta Danorum* of Saxo Grammaticus or Belleforest's French version of the Hamlet story) explicit reference is made to Amlethus as the Danish Brutus (the names Amlethus and Brutus, moreover, mean more or less the same: "simpleton" or "dumb"). It may be objected that Julius Caesar was a military commander and Burghley was anything but a military minded character. However, Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's "Sir Spirit," was considered the architect of the Elizabethan state. William Lambarde, the antiquarian, using the same metaphor as Francis Bacon in his letter, in the epistle dedicatory of *Archion* to Sir Robert Cecil, called him "the very heir of that renowned Nestor, and only Atlas of the English country and commonwealth" and a translator of a history of France "*pater patriae* and pillar of the state," using respectively the same title as Bacon in his early 1590s letter and the same metaphor as Oxford in his September 1575 letter (John Strype, *The Annals of Reformation*, Oxford [1866], Vol. 4,2, p. 470). In terms of political prevalence, likening the *pater patriae* Burghley to the *pater patriae* Caesar, the "northern star" or "pole," was appropriate.

But there is a passage in *Hamlet* linking Burghley and Polonius in a perhaps even more direct way: the first scene in the second act, where Polonius instructs his servant Reynaldo to watch his son Laertes on a visit in Paris. Based on G. Ravenscroft Dennis' book *The House of Cecil*, John Thomas Looney observed that the scene reflects Burghley's instructions to Thomas Windebank, the tutor of his eldest son Thomas on sojourn in Paris. However, another even closer correspondence can be found in one of Oxford's

letters, which as far as I know has not been noticed by Oxfordians.

At this point it may be useful to refer to Alex McNeil's report on the discovery of *Alvearie* in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Spring 2014, and on the related essay by Adam Gopnik in the 28 April issue of *The New Yorker*. McNeil writes: "Gopnik apparently attended the Folger Library's April conference on Shakespeare biography. . . and seems to have come down on the side of those who believe that, by golly, there *is* a connection between an author's life and his or her works: 'To build too high a wall between life and work is not to 'get' the time. It is to miss a vital part of what the time was actually like. . . .'" The connection between *Hamlet* II.i and Oxford's letter is, in my view, particularly strong and direct. To paraphrase Gopnik: Not only is there no high wall, but there is practically no wall at all—and therein resides its high strategic value for the debate on the authorship issue.

The letter in question is the one written by Oxford to Burghley from, precisely, Paris on 17-18 March 1575: "I thank your Lordship I have received farther bills of credit, and letters of great courtesy from Mr. Benedict Spinola. I am also beholding here unto Mr. Reynondo, that has helped me greatly with a number of favors whom I shall desire your Lordship when you have leisure and occasion to give him thanks, for I know the greatest part of his friendship towards me has been in respect of your Lordship." It seems pretty clear that Oxford insinuates that Burghley had instructed Reynondo to stick to Oxford's heels under the color of doing service to him (Oxford), but for the paramount purpose of reporting to Burghley on Oxford's behavior.

The similarity of the names of the servants is striking: Reynaldo, the Italian form of Reynold/Reginald, and Reynondo/Raimondo, the Italian (or Spanish or Portuguese) form of Raymond. There have been attempts to link the name Reynaldo to the hero Rinaldo in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, but this association is devoid of meaning. Much more convincing is to connect the name with Burghley's servant Reynondo cited in Oxford's letter, the names being similar in sound and, to boot, of related etymology. According to Italian Wikipedia the name is of Germanic origin; it is composed of the two elements "ragin," meaning "counsel" or "decision," and "munt," meaning "protection" or "defence." The name Reynaldo is also of Germanic origin and composed of the elements "ragin" and "waldan," meaning "counsel" and "govern" or "administer." Thus the name Reynaldo is a relatively slight, homophonic variation of the etymologically affiliated name Reynondo. The change puts side by side the servant of Polonius and the real servant of Lord Burghley.

Also remarkable is the parallelism between the passage in Oxford's letter from Paris and the opening lines in *Hamlet* II.i. In his letter Oxford first thanks Burghley for the bills of credit (which were probably handed out to him by Reynondo; the bills of credit would correspond to the "notes" to be given to Laertes by Reynaldo in the play). Then Oxford clearly expresses suspicion that Reynondo's services have been provided by Burghley with the afterthought to watch Oxford's behavior in Paris.

Act II. Scene I.

Enter Polonius and Reynaldo.

Pol. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvell's wisely, good Reynaldo, Before you visit him, to make inquire Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

The lines seem to have been culled out from Oxford's memory of his own experience in March 1575 and constitute a fairly strong piece of biographical evidence.



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From the Editor

What's This "Genius" Thing, Anyway?

In putting together this issue, I was especially interested in the summary of Stuart Ritchie's *Psychology Today* post on the nature of genius (see page 8). I was interested not because Ritchie discusses the Shakespeare Authorship Question, but because of Ritchie's second topic, the Dutch painter Johannes (Jan) Vermeer. By happy coincidence my wife and I recently viewed the recent documentary film, *Tim's Vermeer*, on Netflix; we both thought it was terrific, and highly recommend it.

Tim's Vermeer was produced by Penn Gillette and directed by Teller, Penn's magician partner. The film, which is discussed in Ritchie's post, chronicles the efforts of an American inventor, Tim Jenison, to test the hypothesis developed by David Hockney, Charles Falco and Philip Steadman (among others) that Vermeer relied heavily on optical aids—mirrors and lenses—to achieve the extraordinary degree of realism that he is known for; other painters are also suspected of using such aids. Jenison, whose professional background is in video imaging software, proceeded to build a replica of Vermeer's studio (many of Vermeer's surviving paintings were clearly painted in the same room, so it was easy to calculate its dimensions), grind his own pigments and make his own lenses (both using 17th century technology). Using only natural light, he then set out to see if he could paint a replica of one of Vermeer's most famous works, "The Music Lesson."

Spoiler alert: Jenison succeeded in creating such a replica. His basic technique was to focus part of the image onto part of the canvas, and to match, as closely as possible, the colors that were reflected (or projected) onto that area. As Jenison put it, the entire process was "objective," not "subjective." The project took him about seven months.

Tim's Vermeer has received mixed reviews. It was savaged in *The Guardian*, where the reviewer whined that Jenison's replica of "The Music Lesson" didn't look like a Vermeer painting. Well of course it didn't! Tim Jenison had no training as a painter before he got involved with this project. The point of Jenison's effort, and of the film, is not to show that anyone can be a Vermeer, but rather to show that a specific technique for reproducing a subject could well have been employed by a skilled practitioner.

If it is true that Vermeer and others used optical aids, does that diminish their genius? Were they just technicians rather than creative artists? The answer to both questions is obviously no, but many academics—art historians and psychologists—have trouble accepting that answer. They seem to think that "resorting" to such devices as lenses and mirrors lessens the stature of those artists.

As I said to my wife after watching the film, if painters of that time were seeking to capture a greater degree of realism in their works, wouldn't they have *wanted* to use any tool they could to help them? What painter would have said to himself, "using a lens would be cheating, so I'm not going to do it"?

Admittedly, we don't have any external evidence that any late Renaissance painters did use optical aids. No painter wrote about it, nor did any of their subjects or apprentices. However, some mainstream academics are willing to concede that painters may have used lenses or mirrors on occasion, i.e., to solve a particular artistic problem within a painting. The stumbling block seems to be a general reluctance to accept the notion that someone like Vermeer used optical aids as the principal means of creating his works.

One reason for a lack of external evidence of the use of lenses and mirrors, as Hockney and others point out, may be "trade secrets"—that the painters went to great lengths to keep such details private, just as they often concealed their methods of making certain pigments. And, though there may be a lack of external evidence, the proponents argue that the internal evidence—the paintings—speaks for itself.

Well, what does all this have to do with the Shakespeare Authorship Question? It's another instance where the internal evidence, if looked at with an open mind and with the right understanding, is compelling. Although there is no documentary evidence that says flatly that "Edward de Vere was the real Shakespeare," there is so much circumstantial evidence that the conclusion is warranted.

After watching *Tim's Vermeer*, I went to the local library for a biography of Vermeer. I deliberately chose an older one that predated the Hockney-Falco lens theory, to see what it had to say: I ended up with the 1937 revised edition of Philip L. Hale's *Vermeer*. Reading Hale's assessment of Vermeer's talents reminded me of descriptions of Shakespeare's talent by Stratfordian scholars: They're talented critics, and offer many valuable insights, but their understanding is limited by the paradigm within which they work. Here are a few examples of Hale's assessment of Vermeer; note that he is almost describing someone who had to have used optical aids, though that notion never occurred to Hale. Instead, he implicitly ascribes Vermeer's prodigious gifts to "genius":

- "His manner of seeing is the basic excellence of Vermeer's art. . . . [H]e had a genius for vision. One arrives, while studying his works carefully, at a feeling that he looked at things harder than others have looked at them."
- After "he had laid his picture in . . . he seems to have sat back and looked at what was before him again and



Vermeer's "The Music Lesson"

again to see if there was anything he could do to his picture to make it portray more closely the real aspect of nature. . . . His almost perfect rendering was the outcome of perfect understanding."

- "Among [his contemporaries], Vermeer was most notably successful in creating something so like the aspect of nature that the spectator takes the edges [i.e., separations of one form from another] for granted."
- "Anything that would remain still for him—that he

could look at again and again, studying every phase of its appearance, —that thing he was able to depict as no other man could."

- Vermeer "endeavoured to make each tone as it appeared, whether warm, neutral or cool. His quest, unlike that of modern impressionists, had no scientific basis. He merely observed the appearance of things more closely and more naively than they had been observed before his time."

There are also a few biographical details about Vermeer that have some rough parallels to the Shakespeare biography, especially in some areas where evidence that one would expect to find is not found. Jan Vermeer was born in Delft in October 1632. He married a woman from a well-to-do family in 1653. Delft had a strong guild system at the time, with eight separate bodies representing areas of art and design. Vermeer was admitted to the Guild of St. Luke as a painter in 1655, at the age of twenty-one. To be a member of the guild, one had to serve a six-year apprenticeship, yet there is no record of Vermeer having been an apprentice. Some scholars believe he studied under Carel Fabritius (who was known to have been interested in optics), others that he may have been apprenticed to Leonard Bramer, who had traveled widely in Italy before returning to Delft.

In any event, Vermeer was active in the guild, and held a leadership position in it for several years. However, there is no record that he ever had a student or an apprentice. He seems to have encountered financial problems during his lifetime, as he borrowed money on several occasions. He died in December 1675 at age 42, leaving a widow and eight children under the age of 23.

Here is perhaps the most interesting factoid of Vermeer's biography. Because his estate was insolvent, Delft officials appointed a trustee to administer it. And who was that person? Antony van Leeuwenhoek. Yes, the same Leeuwenhoek who is known as the "Father of Microbiology," who vastly improved the microscope *and who made over 500 lenses during his lifetime*. Although Leeuwenhoek held a municipal office which would have entitled him to serve as an administrator, Vermeer biographer Hale does not think that his office was a factor in his selection. Hale doubts that Leeuwenhoek would have been able to collect much of a fee from the estate, and surmises that he and Vermeer had long been friends.

Like Vermeer, Leeuwenhoek was born in Delft in October 1632; the town's population was only 24,000, so Hale assumes that they must have known each other. Moreover, Leeuwenhoek's mother married a painter after Leeuwenhoek's father died in 1637. Although Leeuwenhoek was a draper by trade, he became interested in optics early in his adult life, and thus he could have shared his knowledge with Vermeer. Leeuwenhoek worked alone while making lenses and microscopes, writing that some aspects of his work "I only keep for myself." Some of his lens-making techniques were not replicated until the mid-20th century.

As for Vermeer's actual painting technique, questions still exist. As the filmmakers point out in *Tim's Vermeer*, X-rays show that Vermeer did not make preliminary sketches or drawings on his canvases. No separate drawings or preparatory paintings are known to exist. In some instances he began a work by "underpainting," i.e., painting the entire canvas in one color (usually blue or green), in others he seems to have just "started painting." Moreover, in many cases scholars are uncertain whether

***Brief Chronicles* vol. V Now Available**

Volume V (2014) of *Brief Chronicles* has been published. Hard copies of the journal will be mailed to those members who elected to receive them. The journal is also available online at

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This volume will remain password-protected for one year (it is the same password that is used to access recent issues of the Newsletter; members who need, or have forgotten, the password can send a request to newsletter@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org).

The editor of *Brief Chronicles* is Roger Stritmatter, PhD. The managing editor is Michael Delahoyde, PhD. The current volume contains articles by Delahoyde ("Lyric Poetry from Chaucer to Shakespeare"), Michael Dudley ("By Nature Fram'd to Wear a Crown? Decolonizing the Shakespeare Authorship Question"), Sky Gilbert ("Was Shakespeare a Euphuist? Some Ruminations on Oxford, Lyly and Shakespeare"), Jacob Hughes ("Comparative Caricatures in *King John* and *Troublesome Reign*"), Alex McNeil ("Shakespeare's Five 'Outlier' Sonnets"), Stuart Nettleton ("Bayesian Interrogation of the Elizabethan Social Network for First Folio Authorship"), Michael Wainwright ("The Logical Basis of Oxford's *Troilus and Cressida*"), Richard Waugaman ("Betrayal in the Life of Edward de Vere & the Works of Shakespeare") and Richard Whalen ("What Really Happens in *Macbeth*? An Originalist Reading"), and reviews by Felicia Londre (*The Oxfordian Macbeth*), Tom Regnier (*Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*), Don Rubin (*Shakespeare Beyond Doubt and Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*) and Hanno Wember (*AKA Shakespeare*).

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship publishes two annual journals, *Brief Chronicles* and *The Oxfordian*. Volume 16 of *The Oxfordian*, edited by Dr. Michael Egan, is expected to be published very shortly.

he painted "de premier coup" (piece by piece) or on an "ebauche" (starting with a general rub-in).

Finally, only 34 paintings are indisputably attributed to Vermeer (the number has shrunk considerably in recent decades). Though some works could have been lost, this small number itself suggests that each painting took a long time to create.

Anyway, I highly recommend *Tim's Vermeer*. If you're an authorship doubter, you'll find many parallels. I'm no art historian, and I'm certainly no artist, but I found the case compelling that Jan Vermeer must have used optical aids. And if he did, that still makes him a genius in my book, just like the real Shakespeare.



Book Review

[Edward De Vere was Shake-speare: at long last, the proof. \(The Collected Poems of Edward De Vere\)](#) by Gilbert Wesley Purdy (Kindle edition, 2013)

Reviewed by William J. Ray

Gilbert Wesley Purdy's e-book on Kindle announces that he has found two "smoking guns," or definitive proofs, concerning the identity of the Shakespeare canon's author as Edward de Vere. While his enthusiasm is very understandable, given the fragmentary nature of any single proof concerning a time-fractured, circumstantially established, biography, the killing doesn't match the billing. Purdy deserves much credit for his labors, but the style of their presentation opens them to preemptory, albeit hypocritical, dismissal.

The presentation is characterized by suppositional, incomplete, and sometimes erroneous research and thought. This is not unusual in the field. Virtually all conventional Shakespeare biography is fiction. But given the double standard issuing from the status quo, the outsider must maintain an impeccable level of probity.

Errors of fact and judgment could have been avoided, or at least minimized, by the traditional checks of peer review and comment within a community of like-minded thinkers (or even by a good editor). Unfortunately, such aids to scholarship are hard to come by ad hoc, particularly in the present far-flung, marginalized, counter-academic scholarship that typifies the Oxfordian side of the authorship controversy.

An alternative approach would be to convey any "spectacular" discoveries in an article and leave out the homework. As it is, the book's extensive introduction recreates the run-up to the First Folio. Then it couches the discoveries in a 300-paragraph narrative of the life and times of Edward de Vere. The conclusion dovetails back into the introduction's narrative. The author evidently felt he had to lay out a detailed context for the coup de grace, found 80% into the book. As painful as it may be for a writer, sometimes the best course is to make the strongest case and quit.

First we will review Purdy's "smoking guns": (1) the Marston-Jonson exchanges; and (2) the Joseph Hall satires, including consequent influences upon one Parnassus play. Then we will discuss the problems.

1

John Marston put out *Jacke Drums Entertainment* in 1599, after the death of Lord Burghley and at the beginning of the "Battle of the Theaters." It contained the telltale character, Sir Edward Fortune, who has 2000 pounds and two daughters. De Vere, of course, was receiving a thousand pounds a year from the state and had at least two daughters. The "two's" serve as ciphers that sum to four, or *vier*, a common Vere signal. One of the daughters is being wooed by Pasquill, putatively William

Herbert, who almost married de Vere's daughter Bridget. In the mix is a servant who quotes Shakespeare, a mouthpiece or proxy for the pseudonymous work.

Marston had a hand in writing *Histrionomastix*, which featured the phrase "shakes his furious Speare." The ridiculous adjective plays on *fur* [Vere]-*io* [eo]-*us*[Edward-us].

Marston's *Pygmalion* contains the tell-all line: "So Labeo did complaine his love was stone, obdurate, flinty, so relentless none...." This reiterates *Venus and Adonis* (199-200): "Art thou obdurate, flinty hard as steel,/ Nay more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth...."

Marston also satirized Jonson as Brabent Jr. and Sr., the younger and older Jonson playwright, *Bra* punning on "bray." The reason was that Jonson for his part, in *Poetaster*, created Ovid Jr. and Sr. Ovid Jr. picks up Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Amores*, the very epigram that fronts *Venus and Adonis*. Jonson must have caused angry consternation in some quarters because he had to rewrite some sections under pressure. Purdy writes, "A complaint was filed against Jonson for libeling his betters." *Poetaster* was temporarily withdrawn.

In the play, Crispinus (meaning wooly, like a sheep) is "given a pill to purge him of an overfullness of words." This seems to be a reference to de Vere threatening Shakspeare the wool broker for playing the poet, as retold in *As You Like It* via Touchstone and William.

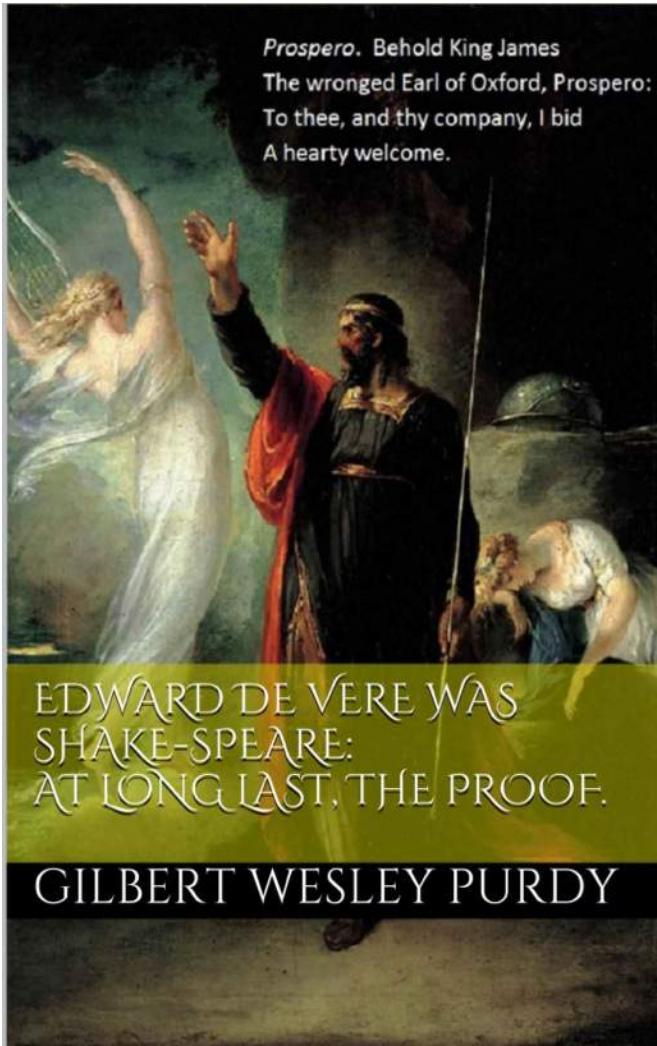
And Jonson made reference to "Julia," alluding to *Romeo and Juliet* but recalling Vavasour and de Vere twenty years before.

The veiled truth-telling and their political consequences give new context to Weever's Parnassus play which states: "Shakespeare hath given him [Jonson] a purge that may bewray—a pun on Bra(y)bent—his credit." In short, Jonson went too far identifying de Vere as Ovid and lost face. His reputation suffered a setback, plausibly from de Vere or censorious political forces or both.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Mayor of London eventually called in Marston's *Pygmalion*, the Nashe-Harvey exchanges regarding *Pierce Penniless*, especially "Speculum Tuscanum," and *Willobie His Avis*. In the aftermath of Burghley's censorship, there seemed to have been a concerted effort to systematically cull any hints in the current literature that identified de Vere as a writer, in particular, as Shakespeare.

2

Jonson was not the first to play upon de Vere's covert vocation. Joseph Hall in *First Three Bookes of Toothless Satyres* (1597), made reference to Labeo: "who list complain of winged faith or fame/ when he may shift it to another's name." He also made sport of "Shakespeare's" work: "But well fair Strabo...contrived all Troy within one walnut shell," a spoof on Hamlet's soliloquy mentioning his preferred world "bounded in a nutshell." Again the adjectives say what the sentence does not. A



“well” in Italian has a *vera*, or casing. “Fair” is a near-homonym of Vere.

Purdy notes that Hall’s inspiration for Labeo may have come from Horace, where he is a nobleman but a madman, killing his servants. Hall’s sketch of Labeo/Juvenal’s Ponticus/Pontian includes (1) a barren wife; (2) two years in Venice; (3) that he cries adultery; (4) he has Phoebus-like intelligence; (5) he has a bold and busy enterprise; (6) he is a Petrarch in English garb; and (7) “But oh!” is a repeated phrase, possibly an allusion to the passion in *Venus and Adonis*, however more likely a name-cue: ‘but’ meaning either *sed*, i.e., ‘s-Ed, or *ver-o* in Latin; and “oh!” (including the exclamation point) alluding to O for Oxford. The exclamation point is an upside-down letter “i”, indicating the Italian equivalent *IO*, which sounds as EO.

Purdy’s discussion about Hall points out other “Shakespearean” features, such as romantically appealing women and the use of hyphens, which are flipped to hyperbole and satire.

Hall’s *First Three Bookes of Toothless Satyres* (1597) and *Three Last Bookes of Byting Satyres* were also placed on the censored list, intended for the “Bishop’s bonfire.”

Like Melville’s *The Rachel*, history rescued yet another orphan.

3

Purdy deserves high marks for giving a literary context whereby allusions to Oxford as Shakespeare went through an official suppression. He quotes from the sources themselves. He makes sense of the puzzling Parnassus line, “bewray his credit,” a longstanding gap in Shakespeare authorship knowledge and the attendant conflicts. Weever capitalized on Jonson being “bewrayed” of his credit for “braying” too much about de Vere, whereas Jonson had related how Shakspeare got deflated (by Shakespeare/de Vere) for pretending to be too much.

These isolated facts form into an understandable pattern of mutual satire, political reverberation, and the use of raw arbitrary power to keep de Vere’s literary activities out of the permanent historical record. While they may never be understood to a certainty, we can make a reasonable appraisal of post-Burghleian events from the literary exchanges with the help of Purdy’s e-book. His analysis would have been enriched by reference to another caustic critic of the time, Gabriel Harvey, described in an article written over a decade ago by Mark Anderson and Roger Stritmatter, “The Potent Testimony of Gabriel Harvey” (*Shakespeare Matters*, Winter 2002).

Robert Cecil successfully completed the public eclipse of de Vere as author during the early reign of James I. The Essex Rebellion denouement and de Vere’s death flattened Shakespeare play and poetry publication for a generation, until the First Folio of 1623. Even as late as 1647, when Lady Anne Clifford commissioned “The Great Picture,” like every other person of rank, she did not permit historic notice of “the Great Oxford” as author of the crowning jewel of Elizabethan English culture. (Cf. “The Missing First Folio,” by Bonner Miller Cutting, *Shakespeare Matters*, Summer 2006) This succession of denials set the stage early for a counterfeit authorship.

4

The title of Purdy’s book, *Edward de Vere was Shakespeare: at long last, the proof*. (*The Collected Poems of Edward de Vere*), is perhaps misleading; this book is not a collection of poems. However, it is intended as the first volume of a two-volume series, setting out the “biography”; the second volume, we are told, will contain the poems of Edward de Vere, which were published under many names as well as anonymously. In the first volume, Purdy makes liberal use of the Sonnets to embellish his claim that de Vere petitioned Queen Elizabeth with poetry. There is no documentary basis for the claim; it must be left open to further investigation.

As an e-book, some publishing conventions are ignored while new ones emerge. There are no page numbers, only a succession of paragraphs, about 300 of them. In the technology, turning back “pages” is no slight chore.

The bibliography is remarkable for being derived largely, if not entirely, from Internet-available texts. Some

century-old volumes are cited with perfect relevance. We have to remind ourselves that the authorship inquiry has occurred episodically, with considerable gaps, and the earlier work is just as good, given the state of knowledge, as the later. If anything, the earlier work operated on a shared assumption that we can find truth by tried and true analytic means: self-restrained theories supported by pertinent and persuasive accumulations of fact.

Within its blog-like format, the book's prose style goes quickly, though in my view too casually for academic rigor. A reader new to the field would benefit from the historical summary. He or she would then have to read widely and deep, rejecting the flotsam and jetsam of first exposures. My objections here are to numerous occurrences of loose and unsupported statements, further marred by poor proofreading and faulty grammar and spelling. Again, a good editor could have improved this book enormously.

For example, did Kyd introduce blank verse, or was it Surrey and Wyatt, perfected by Shakespeare? Were the quartos regularly issued after 1604 as the book states, or were only seven published from 1604 to 1619 (Erne's appraisal)? Was William Herbert "Mr. W.H." of the Sonnets and does it matter in a skip-word dedication puzzle of 144 characters? Did Herbert actually issue the Sonnets and the play scripts, or did Heminge and Condell through the Lord Chamberlain's Men company scribe, or did the "Grand Possessors" have determinative power? Is it true Jonson "did not think of further payment," but thereafter his stipend was increased temporarily to 200 pounds? Was he gifted twenty pounds a year for books by the Lord Chamberlain's wife, or by Susan Vere, Pembroke's brother's wife? Was there a "local Shakespeare industry" by 1700, which necessitated scholars seeking "to document the Stratford figure as an author"? Did de Vere first see John Bale's plays on the Queen's 1563 Progress, or did he know Bale personally as a retainer of his father's at Hedingham from his early childhood? Was it so that "Shakspeare would allow himself to be pointed out as the author of the plays"? That "between 1587 and 1598" William Shakspeare "had been busy learning and subsequently plying the trade of acting"? That Leicester's Men picked him up in 1587? And that afterwards, "He seems to have begun playing bit parts"? There is no basis for any of these statements. "A plaque was struck declaring him to be the Immortal Bard and quietly appeared below the likeness." The Stratford Monument does not declare Shakspeare the Bard and it appeared below the likeness of his father John, a wool broker.

The book states: "Some theorize that Jonson himself fitted the lines [about the Stratford Moniment] into the text he received from Digges." It is neither here nor there what some theorize, though the idea is plausible. Purdy hovers close to the probability that Jonson himself wrote

the Digges poem, which I think he did, using the same cues and number-tricks apparent from his own eulogy and the frontispiece of the First Folio.

In brief, Purdy seems to have inculcated some of the mythology and assumptions of the prevailing ideology to which he takes exception. There is no contemporaneous record of Shakspeare as an actor just as there is none he was a writer. That he may have been an imposter can be inferred from the very materials brought to light in the book.

Another credibility issue regards Francis Meres and *Palladis Tamia*: "It seems clear that Meres knew only that Shakespeare was someone who had written two highly popular poems, and who was widely respected, among more knowledgeable theater-types, also to have anonymously written some popular plays.... Meres does not seem to realize that Oxford and Shakespeare are the same person. At least he is not confident enough to say so."

This is suppositional thinking. It cannot be offered as factual. Meres stated unequivocally (or was given a complete schema to so state) that Lord Oxford and Shakespeare were one and the same. But he did so through a subterfuge, keying their places in a list so as to total ten (10), the typographical equivalent of an Earl of Oxford abbreviation, IO. Meres dealt information by arithmetic and puns as well as by syntax.

Speaking of syntax, I will close with a few examples from Purdy's book easily caught by proofreading—and a writer should never proofread his own work. Shakspeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, not Stratford-on-Avon. The Sonnets were dedicated to the "onlie" begetter, not the "onely" begetter. Oxford commanded the bowmen, not the Bowman. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* should not have "Sundry" and "Flowers" in the title. A work may surely have been written after a given date, not "surly written shortly after" it. The English monarch worshipped at Westminster Abbey, not Westminster Abby. There is a difference between a mask and a masque. A great 19th century scholar was Frederic Fleay, not Professor Flea. Reference to Alan Nelson's website should include noting UC Berkeley—not UC Berkley (eight times). The e-book format is not conducive to either writing or reading detailed scholarship.

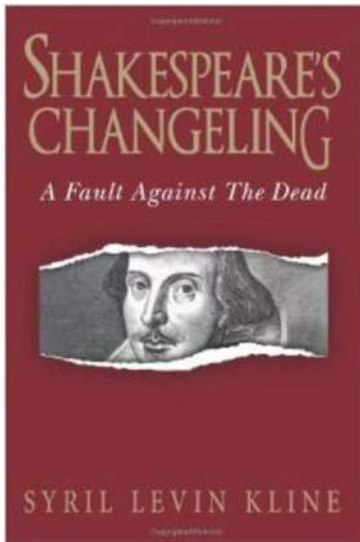
Despite its flaws, however, Gilbert Purdy's *Edward de Vere was Shakespeare: at long last, the proof. (The Collected Poems of Edward de Vere)* does make an undeniable contribution to reconstructing the life and times of the Shakespeare author. It is available at Amazon.com.

[Editor's note: William Ray reviewed the first edition of this book. A second edition is now available, again through Amazon.com, in which the author has created chapter headings and states that he has corrected typographical errors.]

Book Review

[Shakespeare's Changeling: A Fault Against the Dead.](#) [A novel by Cyril Levin Kline](#)

Published by CreateSpace (North Charleston, SC)



Reviewed by Don Rubin

There's a whole field of popular art that has grown up in recent years connected to the authorship issue generally and Oxfordian issues in particular. For all of us interested in spreading the gospel, such works are at worst an indication that the word is getting out and, at best, an actual contribution to the

literary and cinematic arts.

Number one on the popular list is, of course, Roland Emmerich's big budget film, *Anonymous*, which, for all its arguable flaws, brought the subject to the kind of lay audience that Oxfordians could not even have dreamed of reaching a few years back. It is a fictional work based in a core of provocative facts that has made a very large public at least aware of the name Edward de Vere. Brilliantly made and featuring some fine performances, the film promised to be a tsunami to the cause but proved in the end to be only a strong rainstorm. On the other hand, in a worthy cause, a good drenching in an alternative world never hurts.

Several other useful storms have also come down on us in the last decade or so in the literary field with several major companies having published novels with Oxford and/or the authorship issue as central. Probably the two best of these have been Sarah Smith's cleverly plotted *Chasing Shakespeares* (Simon & Schuster/Washington Square Press, 2003) and Jennifer Lee Carrell's immensely entertaining *Interred With Their Bones* (Penguin/Plume, 2007). Now comes Cyril Levin Kline's *Shakespeare's Changeling: A Fault Against the Dead*, apparently self-published through CreateSpace in South Carolina.

Of course, popular novels featuring our favourite Earl go back many decades. One early effort was Burke Boyce's *Cloak of Folly* published by Harper and Brothers in 1949. Canadian Lynne Kositsky even published a children's novel some years back featuring a search for Shakespeare's true identity called *A Question of Will* (Roussan) in 2000. There are numerous others on the growing list.

Where does Cyril Kline's new effort fit in on the Oxfordian spectrum? Let's say for the moment that she leaves not an Oxfordian turn unstoned. One wanders through this amusing and fast-paced fiction continually amazed and amused by the connections being made between what we already know and what might just be. No surprise that.

Her husband, Peter Kline, it seems, had earlier published a book called *The Shakespeare Mysteries* and Cyril says in an afterword that she used the earlier book as a main source for her story. Indeed, she says that events were "linked together the same way a forensic scientist builds a compelling case based on the evidence." *NCIS* would be proud.

In addition to known events, there is also a fair amount of fiction here, curious elements that are certainly possible in the tale but elements not really explored seriously by most Oxfordian scholars. Oxford here meets William of Stratford head-on and, rather than coming to blows, they effectively use one another to attain both their ends. Kline cleverly uses a faint family connection (first suggested by Ogburn, she tells us) between de Vere and Shaxper (through Elizabeth Trussel, wife of the 15th Earl) which enables Will to claim kinship with the esteemed Earl and which gives him justification "to protect his noble kinsman" generally and his literary identity specifically.

Kline's Oxford is great fun here. He is blustery and bold; he loves the theater as well as he loves his women. And he loves them a lot. As things work out here, Oxford is looking for a secretary/scribe early on to fair copy his plays and front for him as author. Lyly seems to hold that job at first, and is both more trusted and more talented, but Shaxper needs the work and is willing never to go much beyond being just a secretary. At least in Kline's hands, he is able to read and write, a real problem with the Emmerich film where Shaxper was little more than a rapacious dolt.

Oxford is also the Queen's favorite in this novel. He and Liza, we are told, "were always behind closed doors, loving and singing and dancing and speaking of court masques and theatrical illusions, [reading] scenes from Oxford's plays as a prelude to their long nights of unabridged passion." Yes, the Prince Tudor Theory abounds in Kline's reading and goes all the way from incest and the birth of a girl child in Anne Cecil and her father's case, to a secret marriage between the Queen and Oxford and the ultimate birth of a boy child given to the Southampton family to raise.

As the novel bounces along, Will also becomes very rich, with almost everyone in Elizabethan literary circles knowing who really wrote the plays and the rules of the lordship game. Oxford's money and position, for the most part, trumps everyone and everything. And Shaxper is happy to go along for the well-paid ride.

Kline is clearly unafraid to put forward a few not-so-historical assertions of her own. Oxford's death turns out

to be the product and project of Robert Cecil (that's right, Robert) who sees it as a necessity to protect the crown for James I. Oxford is brutally murdered in his home with Shaxper as a terrified and hidden accidental witness. The Earl's body, of course, is quickly removed (officially because of an alleged bout of plague) and the Earl's will destroyed.

And then there's Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton, years later, searching for the real Shakespeare manuscripts in old Will's attic in Stratford, manuscripts that the illiterate and shrewish Anne Hathaway has been using to make fires in the cold house as Will Shaxper himself lies dying; Will apparently feels just a tinge of guilt at never having had the opportunity to admit that he himself did not write the plays.

As for poor old Anne Hathaway, in Kline's version she is just plain dumb and, in fact, when Shaxper looks at her all he can see is "Anne Whatley's face.... She was the maiden he really loved, and if he hadn't gotten Anne Hathaway pregnant and been hauled before the parish priest to marry her, his life would have been different. Anne Whatley of Temple Grafton would have understood his feelings about London. She might have joined him there."

The book is structured in five "acts" with the central agonists being the money-driven Shaxper and a lust-driven but talented and heterosexual Lord Oxford. It is an unequal but always interesting battleground in which the two men need, rather than like or even respect, one another. We move backward and forward in time. Over the course of the 300 or so pages it seems as if every hint and clue and inference and reference one has ever read about either man is mentioned and then woven into the fabric. At times, the weaving is almost too clever. Almost.

For Oxfordians, *Shakespeare's Changeling* is mostly an amusing ride through rather familiar territory. But each time you are ready to give up on it as "too" clever, it turns unexpectedly and keeps you reading until the end. Not as brightly articulate and well-written as *Interred With Their Bones* (probably the best of the authorship-driven novels) or as historically driven or credible as *Chasing Shakespeares*, Kline's novel nevertheless holds up as a fiction worth reading dealing with a subject whose central mystery is still only being sniffed by the broader public.

[Don Rubin is the General Editor of Routledge's six-volume *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre* and a Professor and former Chair of the Department of Theatre at Toronto's York University. He was Coordinating Director of the 2013 Toronto joint conference.]

2014 Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre Summer Conference a Success

by Earl Showerman

Two years ago, Professor Roger Stritmatter and I hiked into an old-growth wilderness forest near my home, one that had burned the previous summer as a result of a bolt of lightning. The dense-pack of smaller trees and brush were gone, replaced by healthy grasses and flowers, while the towering canopy of 300- to 500-year-old fir, pine and cedar trees remained intact, their charred lower bark the only visible evidence of the recent purifying fire. It occurred to me that much of 20th century Shakespeare





biography and scholarship could use a similar magic fire, one that would clear the brush of orthodox commentaries and theories obscuring our appreciation of a 400-year-old mystery.

Along the way, Roger and I discussed the possibility of bringing together a group of Shakespeare lovers for a weeklong authorship seminar under the sponsorship of Concordia University, focusing on the plays in production at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, combining education with entertainment, knowledge with pleasure, vision with inspiration. The 2014 Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre Summer Seminar that convened on August 8 was the realization of that dream, as a dozen participants gathered in Portland. The program began with an opening reception and a screening of Al Pacino's film, *Looking for Richard*.

The seminar continued at the SARC over the weekend, and then moved on to Ashland for productions of *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest*, and *Richard III* at the Tony Award winning Shakespeare Festival. There, participants also attended morning classes at Southern Oregon University and enjoyed an exhibit of 16th and 17th century Folio editions from the Hannon Library Bailey Collection. The final two days of the program were conducted back at the SARC, completing more than thirty-five hours of presentations and animated discourse. The success of this model may be measured by the comments from attendees:

Shelly Maycock: "The entire experience was a delightful blend of conference, colloquia, collaborative inquiry and performance experience. Lively discussion and anecdotes about the history of the question as well as veteran Oxfordians' personal experiences were an

unexpected additional highlight of the week. We managed, with Roger's guidance and multimedia presentations, to do the plays justice. Some great moments of spontaneous discovery and humor ensued. The combined expertise of the attendees and presenters led to productive discussions as well as instruction that worked well for all levels of knowledge and acumen. The introductory background Roger provided before each of the plays informed our experience and understanding of the performances. All the attendees were able to make contributions, and it was terrific to have Bonner Cutting's historiographical expertise, as well as Earl Showerman's long experiences with Ashland's Festival and knowledge of the Greek influences. Everyone present had some experience of the question and something to offer to the group; especially valuable were the insights of those new to the authorship question."

Bonner Cutting: "First, a comment on Roger Stritmatter's remarkable teaching style, thorough in his command of the material, but soft-spoken and encouraging of group participation. This led to synergistic 'groupthink' and meeting of the minds which in turn took advantage of the store of knowledge that the Oxfordian attendees brought to the table. Especially illuminating was the historical information about the *Henry* tetralogy and the correlating of this with the Shakespeare canon, which proved to be vital to our understanding of the drama and plot lines of the chronicle plays."

Dr. Lindy Burnham: "From diverse educational disciplines, we came practiced in critical thinking to study and share the joy of discovery, to map of the tempest of souls acted on the stages of Ashland and in film and video clips, the archetypes playing out in English history and in

Greek and Roman amphitheaters, as recorded by philosophers, poets, and secretaries to kings, to understand our own times, our personal, political, and occupational relationships in this twinkling of our lives.”

Jane Maynard: “Over the last two years, I have been dipping my toe in the authorship challenge, but after attending the Concordia seminar, I am now approaching total immersion in this incredibly ripe quest. The pace, activities, quality of the presentations, and the conviviality of our group were stellar, and made for a most enjoyable and informative week. I look forward to what comes next. More, please.”

Joella Werlin: “Roger’s presentations brought on a tempest. His penetrating insights into each of the OSF plays stirred up the dozen travelers, such that each of us fired new volcanic eruptions. The calm moments in the Margery Bailey collection of antiquarian books—touching period history before our eyes—gave genesis to more brainstorm. What a privilege to be in this journey!”

Mary Berkowitz: “I found the camaraderie and generosity of the company to be as joyous as the scholarship and original discoveries and ideas shared among the instructors and attendees. A unique combination of expertise (genealogy, history, language, including Greek, and passion) lent an expansive perspective to the seminar goals of learning and sharing knowledge.”



On the assurance of this success, we plan to repeat this year’s “experiment” on a grander scale for the 2015 Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship annual conference, to be held in Ashland, September 24-27, where theater tickets have already been reserved for *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Start planning now to join our colleagues in attending what promises to be the “edutainment” event of the year.



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Q. How many Stratfordians does it take to change a light bulb?

A. None, because to them the bulb doesn’t need changing.

Q. How many Oxfordians does it take to change a light bulb?

A. Send your suggestions to newsletter@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org