



Billy Budd and The Monument

by C. V. Berney

Billy Budd, Foretopman, is Herman Melville's last literary work. He was working on it almost to the day of his death, 27 September 1891. His wife put the manuscript into a tin breadbox, where it remained for over thirty years. Eventually the manuscript was passed on to a scholar by Melville's granddaughter, and *Billy Budd* was included in a uniform edition of Melville's works in 1924.¹ It has since come to be regarded as a classic—a poignant and layered parable of the human condition.

Billy Budd. The story concerns a sailor of radiant beauty (he is frequently referred to as “the Handsome Sailor”). The time is 1797, and England is at war with Napoleonic France. The British navy must be manned, and Billy is impressed—forcibly transferred from a merchant ship to a man-o'-war, the *Indomitable*. There he incurs the enmity of Claggart, the master-at-arms, whose responsibility it is to detect and suppress any mutinous inclinations among the seamen. Claggart sets Billy up by

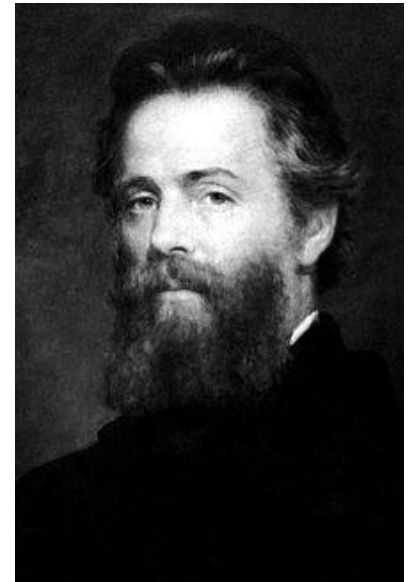
having one of his subordinates propose a *sub rosa* meeting to Billy. The young sailor indignantly refuses to participate, but does not report the incident to the authorities. This sin of omission allows Claggart (reporting to the captain of the ship) to represent Billy

as the leader of a mutinous plot. The captain, stunned by an accusation so at odds with what he has seen of Billy's behavior, calls for an immediate face-to-face confrontation. Billy has one flaw: under stress, he has difficulty speaking. When Claggart repeats the accusation to Billy's face, he struggles to respond, then reflexively strikes Claggart, who is killed by the blow.

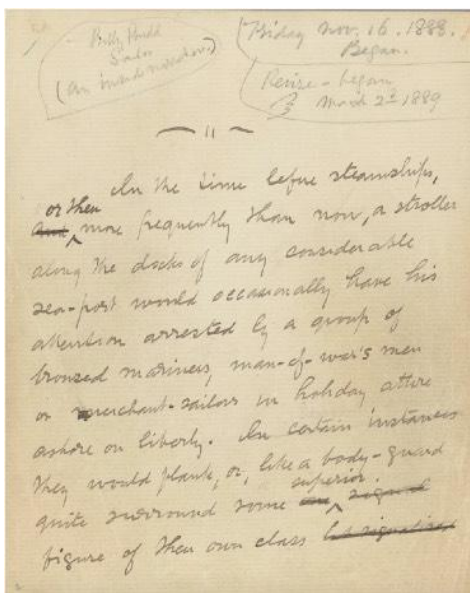
Agonizingly aware of Billy's essential innocence, the captain is nevertheless forced to order Billy's immediate trial and execution.

The Monument is Hank Whittemore's groundbreaking analysis of Shakespeare's Sonnets.² Whittemore sees the Sonnets as divided into three groups. Sonnets 1-26 are addressed to the “Fair Youth,” with the first seventeen urging him to marry and beget an heir. In common with most scholars, Whittemore identifies the “Fair Youth” as Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton. Whittemore takes the further step of postulating that Southampton is the natural son of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, by Queen Elizabeth. As the son of the queen, Southampton is the natural heir to the throne. The last group (Sonnets 127-154) is mostly addressed to the Dark Lady, the queen who defaulted on promises made to Oxford, the author of the Sonnets. The central group of 100 sonnets constitutes a set of

(Continued on page 28)



Herman Melville



From the President:

Be Sure to Ask for *Is Shakespeare Dead?* at the Mark Twain House in Hartford

In June 2017, I visited the Mark Twain House in Hartford, Connecticut, where Mark Twain and his family lived from 1874 to 1891. That 17-year period is the longest that Twain ever lived in one place, and those years were among the happiest and most productive of his life. In the billiard room on the third floor, Twain kept a writing desk, and this is where he wrote *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and *Life on the Mississippi*, among other works. Twain biographer Justin Kaplan described the beautiful but unorthodox house as “part steamboat, part medieval fortress and part cuckoo clock.” After the house was built, Twain said, “It is a home—& the word never had so much meaning before.” Later, he would write:

To us, our house . . . had a heart, and a soul, and eyes to see us with; and approvals and solitudes and deep sympathies; it was of us, and we were in its confidence and lived in its grace and in the peace of its benediction.

For anyone who has ever been disappointed by a visit to the purported Shakespeare birthplace in Stratford, a trip to the Mark Twain House—which, just like Twain himself,

utterly oozes authenticity—is the perfect antidote. In 2012, the Twain House was named one of the Ten Best Historic Homes in the world in *The Ten Best of Everything*, a National Geographic Books publication. Right next to the house is a more modern building, the Mark Twain Museum. It features a Ken Burns film about Twain, numerous exhibits from Twain’s life, and, as one might expect, a statue of Mark Twain made entirely of legos. It also has a bookstore, filled with books by—who else?—Mark Twain.

When I walked into the bookstore, I asked the salespersons the question that is bound to be on the tip of the tongue of every Shakespeare authorship skeptic who finds himself in such a thoroughly Twainian bookstore: “**Do you have *Is Shakespeare Dead?***” The reference was to Twain’s hilarious 1909 book, subtitled *From My Autobiography*, in which he lampoons the theory that William Shaksper of Stratford wrote the works of “Shakespeare.” At the end of a chapter summarizing the conjectures, surmises, and speculations about how the Stratford man came to write these great works, Twain asks: “Shall I set down the rest of the Conjectures which constitute the giant Biography of William Shakespeare? It would strain the Unabridged Dictionary to hold them. He is a Brontosaur: nine bones and six hundred barrels of plaster of paris.”

My question appeared to cause consternation to the two very congenial and helpful women who worked at the bookstore. One of them commented that she thought that

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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 an annual scholarly journal, *The Oxfordian*.

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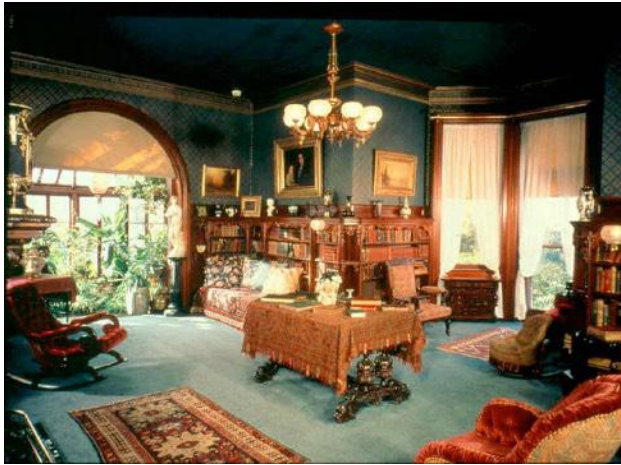
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Mark Twain house,
completed in 1874.



Mark Twain
house library.



Is Shakespeare Dead? was a short story. I responded that it was part of Twain's autobiography, which seemed to surprise her. She asked if it was humorous. I replied, "It's by Mark Twain—of course it's humorous." The second salesperson looked up *Is Shakespeare Dead?* in the store's computer and said that they didn't have that title. After a while, however, the first salesperson industriously managed to locate the full *Is Shakespeare Dead?* buried in an anthology of Twain works in the store. Another Twain anthology contained a lone chapter from the book. But the bottom line is that the Mark Twain Museum did not appear to carry *Is Shakespeare Dead?* as a stand-alone volume in its all-Mark-Twain bookstore.

This situation may seem like "*déjà vu* all over again" to Oxfordians who are aware of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship's recent difference of opinion with the University of California at Berkeley's taxpayer-funded Mark Twain Project Online (MTPO). The MTPO inexplicably omitted *Is Shakespeare Dead?* from its online version of Twain's *Autobiography*, despite the fact that Twain expressly titled the book, *Is Shakespeare Dead? From My Autobiography*. The SOF publicly protested the MTPO's decision and received a response that it found less than satisfactory. (See *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Summer 2016, p. 5.)

Can it be that there is embarrassment within the Mark Twain establishment (if such an entity exists) that Twain, one of the few great writers considered worthy even to be mentioned in the same breath as Shakespeare, believed that the widely-accepted scholarly attribution

of the authorship of Shakespeare's works was a colossal misunderstanding, if not an outright hoax? At any rate, the Mark Twain Museum bookstore is probably far less culpable than the MTPO, which professes to be an all-inclusive Twainian project. The bookstore, on the other hand, has limited physical space and is subject to the laws of supply and demand: it probably doesn't experience a great many visitors walking in and asking for *Is Shakespeare Dead?* Perhaps we can change that.

I reported my findings to the SOF Board of Trustees, who unanimously voted to send ten paperback copies of *Is Shakespeare Dead?* to the Mark Twain Museum bookstore. Although we know that the books have been delivered, we do not know if the bookstore has yet placed them on its shelves for sale. Therefore, if you should visit the Mark Twain House & Museum in Hartford (an excursion that I highly recommend for its own sake), I encourage you to walk into the bookstore and ask, with great expectation and aplomb, "Do you have *Is Shakespeare Dead?*?" Please be prepared to buy a copy if the answer is yes.

– Tom Regnier, President

For information on visiting the Mark Twain House & Museum in Hartford, visit their website at <https://www.marktwainhouse.org/>

Mark Twain's *Is Shakespeare Dead?* is freely available online at <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2431> or may be purchased in paperback from Amazon.

See also Professor James Norwood's article, "Mark Twain and 'Shake-Speare': Soul Mates," published in *Brief Chronicles*, Volume 6.

From the Editor

In this issue you'll find Chuck Berney's thought-provoking paper on connections between Herman Melville's last work, *Billy Budd*, and Oxford. The parallels Berney draws are so numerous that these connections can't be coincidental. And, if they are indeed deliberate, the question is where did Melville get his insight? It's possible that there was some form of esoteric knowledge passed down over the centuries, but it's more likely that Melville was pointed in Oxford's direction by one of his closest literary friends: Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Herman Melville (1819-1891) made the acquaintance of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) sometime after 1846, when Hawthorne, using an alias, wrote a favorable review of Melville's first novel, *Typee*. They were close friends from 1850 to 1852; Melville even dedicated his masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*, to Hawthorne. In the fall of 1852 Hawthorne helped support Franklin Pierce's presidential bid, and a grateful Pierce rewarded Hawthorne with the lucrative diplomatic post of U.S. consul in Liverpool. While serving in that position, Hawthorne (at the behest of his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Peabody) traveled to London to meet the 19th century's most famous authorship doubter, Delia Bacon. Bacon's interest in the authorship question began in the 1840s, and in 1856 she went to England to find more evidence in support of her theory of multiple authorship of Shakespeare (Oxford was one of the several persons Bacon posited as contributing authors). The two met on July 28, 1856. Bacon gave Hawthorne her manuscript. According to one Hawthorne scholar, "Hawthorne evinced an interest that went beyond mere politeness. He and [his wife] Sophia read [the manuscript]. Sophia thought it brilliant, and Hawthorne undertook to see that it was published," wrote an introduction to it, and subsidized the production costs. Nina Baym, "Delia Bacon: Hawthorne's Last Heroine," *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 20:2 (Fall 1994), 1-10.

In November 1856 Melville arrived in Liverpool at the beginning of a tour of Europe and the Holy Land, and renewed his friendship with Hawthorne. Melville had a lifelong interest in the works of Shakespeare; most critics acknowledge that Shakespeare was his biggest literary influence. It is certainly not hard to imagine that the two old friends would have had long conversations about Hawthorne's most recent literary project. Perhaps it was at that time, or perhaps later when he was working and reworking *Billy Budd*, that Melville learned more about Oxford in particular.

Postscript: Hawthorne later wrote about Delia Bacon in "Recollections of a Gifted Woman," in one of his last works, *Our Old Home* (1863), in which he praised her intellect and perspicacity. Nina Baym opines that "Hawthorne did not believe [Bacon's] theory and he

should have not believed it." But if he didn't believe it, why did he go to so much trouble to get Bacon's work published? One wonders whether Hawthorne deliberately downplayed or concealed his real opinion in view of the firestorm of criticism that Bacon's theory engendered at the time.

Also in this issue you'll find something new to these pages: an acrostic. As you most of you know, an acrostic (at least nowadays) is a puzzle that contains a quotation from a book or other literary work. All the letters within the quotation are numbered, and they appear as clues, with definitions. When you've filled in all the clues, the first letter of each clue, reading downward, gives the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

This was my first attempt at any kind of acrostic. It took a couple of days, and it was fun for the most part. The first challenge was to find a literary work where the name of the author and the title together contain about 25 to 30 characters, which is the optimum number of clues to have. That criterion eliminated sources like *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* by Charlton Ogburn, Jr. (ouch!—47 letters). I selected one with 28 characters, which meant I'd need exactly 28 clues. The second challenge was to find a quote within the chosen source that's (1) about 200-240 characters, (2) interesting, and (3) contains all the letters in the name of the author and the work. That wasn't too hard. I found a selection I liked that contained 226 characters. The third challenge, by far the most difficult one, was to rearrange the 226 characters in the quote into a series of 28 clues. I began by making a list of how many there were of each letter, e.g., 14 *a*'s, 3 *b*'s, ... 15 *i*'s, etc. According to the rules of modern acrostics, I knew what the first letter of each clue had to be. Then I started making words from my list of available letters, crossing off each letter as it was used.

Obviously, as I reached the end of the clues I had an increasingly smaller store of letters to be used. The first time through, as I reached the end it was like playing Scrabble with a terrible set of tiles—I was left with something like 3 *h*'s, 6 *n*'s, 5 *o*'s and a *v*. So it was back to the drawing board for a second attempt, this time trying to be more parsimonious with letters that are easier to work with, like *e*, *r*, *s* and *t*. Eventually I completed the task, though admittedly some of the clues are on the esoteric side. Several clues use words from Shakespeare's works, and there's no shame in using a concordance or other device to help solve the clues.

Beware—a second acrostic has been prepared for a future issue!

Alex McNeil

What's the News?

SOF Again Receives Funds for Research Grant Program

For the second year in a row, the SOF has received a generous grant from the Joe W. & Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation to be used to provide matching funds for the SOF's Research Grant Program. This means, of course, that the power of your contribution in support of the Program is doubled—your donation of \$50 is worth \$100, your donation of \$150 is worth \$300, and so on. John Hamill, Chair of the SOF's Research Grant Committee, said that this year's goal is to award up to \$20,000 for research grants. The deadline for submitting grant proposals is October 31, 2017. Full details on submission policies and application procedures may be found online (<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shakespeare-oxford-fellowship-research-grant-program/>) and in the Spring 2017 issue of the *Newsletter*.

You can also make a contribution in support of the Research Grant Program here: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/product/research-grant-fund/>

Or you can mail it to the SOF at Post Office Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466.

SOF Surveys Rare Book and Manuscript Librarians for Archival Materials

A few months ago the Board of Trustees approved and funded a project to contact rare book and manuscript librarians in the United States in an effort to discover new archival materials relating to the 17th Earl of Oxford, in particular previously unknown letters by or to him, and books once owned by him.

To that end, in late February the following letter was sent from Professor Felicia Londre of the University of Missouri at Kansas City, to all 375 members of the Rare Book and Manuscript Section of the American Library Association:

Does your library hold any books or letters whose provenance connects them in any way to Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604)? Has your library catalogued any books or letters by Oxford?

For example, the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. holds Oxford's Geneva Bible as well as his copy of Francesco Guicciardini's history of Italy (Italian edition). The Huntington Library in San Marino, California, holds several letters written by Oxford to Queen Elizabeth I.

Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated and certainly acknowledged when this

research into the 17th Earl of Oxford's life comes to fruition.

Three months later, responses were received from more than forty librarians at thirty libraries in universities, museums and research institutes. Regrettably, none responded in a positive manner. The following institutions reported having no letters or books owned by Oxford: Thomas Balch Library; Getty Research Institute; Hagley Museum and Library; Harvard Business School; Rosenbach Museum and Library; Smithsonian Research Libraries; Yale Law School; Bowdoin College; Georgetown University; Haverford College; Northern Illinois University; Indiana State University; Lincoln University; Michigan State University; Mississippi State University; Pennsylvania State University; Rutgers University; Saint Louis University; Texas State University; Vanderbilt University; Wayne State University; University of Arizona; University of Delaware; University of Maryland; University of Minnesota; University of Nevada; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; University of Notre Dame; University of Central Oklahoma; Bruce McKittrick Rare Books.

Elizabeth Fuller, the librarian at The Rosenbach Museum in Philadelphia, wrote regarding a jug with the arms of Elizabeth I. It was once referred to as "the Earl of Oxford's bottle (or vase or ewer)," but the curators there no longer consider this to be the case:

In reply to your letter of 27 February, the Rosenbach does not have any books or letters by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, nor any objects with any known connection to him. We do have one object once thought to have been his, but further examination of the evidence does not support the claim. Since you may have found published references to it, here is a brief description and explanation.

The object is a stoneware jug with the arms of Elizabeth I (accession # 54.1871). Our catalog description, with a photo, is on line at <http://rosenbach.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/FA320E75-86DB-41FA-AC7F-855286931889>. It was at one time referred to as "the Earl of Oxford's bottle [or vase or ewer]," but this identification seems to have been based solely on:

- 1) the arms of Elizabeth I and the date 1594 on the body of the jug,
- 2) the fact that the Earls of Oxford used a bottle as a badge in right of their hereditary office of Lord Great Chamberlain and Officer of the Ewrie, and
- 3) the boar's-head crest depicted in the silver-gilt stopper.

On further examination, these elements do not support any association with either the Queen or any Earl

of Oxford. The royal arms were commonly used as decoration on such jugs intended for the English market, and did not imply a personal connection with the Queen. The crest of de Vere is a whole boar, rather than simply the head; the two are not interchangeable in heraldry. The coronet is of the pattern used for the crest of a marquess, which is different from that of an earl.

We have corresponded with experts from the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh; the Victoria & Albert; and the College of Arms in London, and their consensus is that the stopper is a nineteenth-century addition; they suggest that it is the crest of Campbell, Marquess of Lorne, the eldest son of the Duke of Argyll. As to its earlier provenance, we have only a few clues. Philippa Glanville of the V&A thinks it “a reasonable explanation” that a 19th-century Marquess of Lorne, born in 1845, who was the husband of Queen Victoria’s daughter Princess Louise and Governor of Windsor Castle, may have received it as a gift from the Queen. She adds, however, that “stoneware pots, however elaborate the stamped decoration of those intended for the English market, were not courtly objects in the later 16th century.”

While this project has so far not yielded new archival discoveries, we believe it will save Oxfordian researchers invaluable research time by having surveyed the rare book librarians in the United States. The Board of Trustees hopes that British Oxfordians will undertake their own survey of rare book and manuscript librarians in Great Britain, where the likelihood of success is much higher.

Richard Roe’s Book Dismissed by Italian Academic

In his latest book, *Shakespeare’s Italy and Italy’s Shakespeare* (2016), Shaul Bassi refers to Richard Roe’s research in *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* (2011) to dismiss Roe’s claim that Shakespeare visited Italy. He does not evaluate Roe’s evidence, but rejects it *in toto*. His dismissal is diplomatic but conclusive: “It takes a less than skeptical reader to show that what the book conveys is primarily an irresistible desire to be proven right, an admirable devotion for Shakespeare as a repository of riddles, and a genuine self-satisfaction at solving them” (140-141).

What’s more, Bassi refers to Roe’s publisher (HarperCollins) as a “prestigious mainstream publisher,” which is an academic’s way of insulting the intellectual integrity of the publisher. This is further confirmed when Bassi describes Roe as “an American lawyer.”

Bassi attributes Shakespeare’s knowledge of Venice to the following—“he had easy access to many books and

stories on a very famous city.” Yet Bassi does not offer up a single book, story or individual contact to which Shakespeare had “easy access”—it’s just an assertion without any supporting evidence.

Though published in 2016, Bassi’s book does not list in its bibliography Noemi Magri’s own research collected in *Such Fruits Out of Italy*, which was published in the summer of 2014.

Finally, Bassi dismisses the entire Shakespeare authorship issue by citing to the collection of essays edited by Stanley Wells and Paul Edmondson, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* (2013), as a conclusive refutation of all alternative Shakespeare candidates. As for authorship “deniers,” Bassi tells us that “the struggle against conspiracy theorists cannot be won by accumulating more and more biographical details in the face of a barrage of weird conjectures...”

Bassi is not another journeyman academic, but a leading Italian expert on Shakespeare, a professor of English at Ca’Foscari University of Venice, author of three books on Shakespeare, including *Visions of Venice in Shakespeare* and *Paper Bullets of the Brain: Experiments with Shakespeare*.

Given the vehemence of Bassi’s dismissal of Roe and the authorship issue itself, it is clear that Roe’s work has achieved enough success to elicit a very aggressive attack by someone of Bassi’s stature. While sales figures are not available for Roe’s *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, the book is catalogued in 435 libraries, including forty-two overseas. I think that Bassi’s rant also demonstrates that academia has no intention of evaluating any evidence that Oxfordian researchers may present for scholarly review. In that sense, the Oxfordian hypothesis is still being quarantined by academics.

[Contributed by Gary Goldstein]

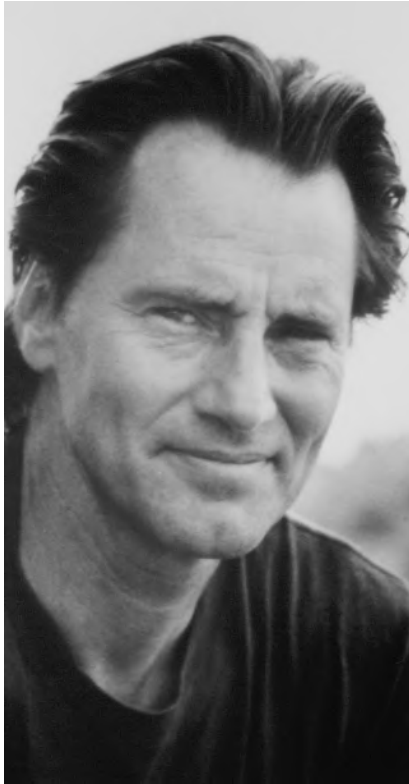
Was Sam Shepard an Authorship Doubter?

Hailed by *New York* magazine as “the greatest American playwright of his generation,” Sam Shepard appears to have been a Shakespeare authorship skeptic. In 1986, Shepard was interviewed by Jonathan Cott for *Rolling Stone*, and the following exchange took place:

Cott: One of your fans told me that you were Shakespeare. And like you, Shakespeare didn’t go around promoting himself in the media.

Shepard: I think that’s because he didn’t exist. I think there was a whole cover-up for him.

Cott: You do?



Sam Shepard

Shepard: Yeah. I think there's a big mystery about Shakespeare, but it's too late to confirm it [laughs]. I mean, look at the plays, the way they suddenly shift gears—from the earlier period to those later tragedies. Something happened that nobody knows about. I think he was involved in something deeply mysterious and esoteric, and at the time they had to keep it

under wraps. There's an awful lot of

amazing insight in his plays that doesn't come from an ordinary mind. And there was a tremendous monastic movement at that time. Who knows what he was into?

Born Samuel Shepard Rogers III in 1943, Shepard died July 27, 2017, at age 73. He wrote forty-four plays, numerous screenplays, and many short stories, essays, and memoirs. He won six Obie awards for playwriting and a Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1979 for his play *Buried Child*. He was also an actor, and was nominated for an Academy Award in 1983 for his portrayal of Chuck Yeager in *The Right Stuff*. In addition, he found time to teach classes and seminars on playwriting and other topics, and was an accomplished musician. Hmmm—does that assortment of artistic skills remind you of anyone from the Elizabethan era?

[Editor: Thanks to Gary Goldstein for the *Rolling Stone* tip!]

Shakespeare Comes to the Small Screen

On July 10, a new TV series premiered, the first continuing series to feature Shakespeare as the main character. Titled *Will*, it airs on TNT. The first season order was for ten episodes. *Will* is set in London in the 1580s, and depicts the title character not only as the true Bard, but also as a secret Catholic. Laurie Davidson stars in the title role. We'll have a full review by James Norwood in the Fall issue of the *Newsletter*.



Making a Planned Gift to the SOF

by Tom Rucker, SOF Treasurer

If for you, the old adage “You can't take it with you” resonates more and more as time passes, as it does for me, let me share something I have done with that thought in mind. It's an action that pleases me and will benefit the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship.

Though I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as an officer and trustee of the SOF, I decided that I wanted to do more. I have been retired for almost seven years; while I still have responsibilities to my family, I found a way to “have my cake and eat it too.” I have several life insurance policies, which I took out when I had a mortgage and children's college educations to pay for. I wanted to provide for these expenditures in case I died an untimely death. Thankfully, I didn't, so those policies are really no longer needed. But I still have them, so I

decided to name the SOF as a partial beneficiary under one of them. The SOF will receive the proceeds following my death.

Why did I choose this way to benefit the SOF? It was easy to do. My insurance agent and I selected the policy; I signed a form and mailed it in. It took all of thirty minutes. Also, the SOF will receive its gift, free of any probate applicable to my estate, promptly following my death.

If you feel as I do—that the current and future efforts of the SOF are of paramount importance for the Oxfordian cause—then you may wish to consider making a similar type of gift that the SOF will receive at a later date. To that end, I list below a number of ways that you can benefit the SOF in a way that fits with your particular situation. Please read them and give some thought to what makes sense for you. Should you have any questions about gifting opportunities, I would be happy to chat with you about them in the strictest

confidence. Feel free to contact me at the postal address or email below:

Tom Rucker c/o Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship
P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466
or Email: thomas.rucker17@yahoo.com

DETAILS:

Bequests

One of the most popular ways to make a planned gift to a nonprofit organization is by including a bequest to the organization in your will or trust. This can be in the form of a specific amount or a percentage of the estate. An example of the latter is the Trust of T. Robert Chapman, a longtime member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, who died in 1997. Mr. Chapman specified that five percent of the assets remaining after the death of his final trust beneficiary would go to the SOS (now SOF). As a result, we received \$52,600 in 2012.

To include a bequest in your will, you will need to use language similar to the following:

I hereby give, devise and bequeath \$ _____ or _____ (specific asset), or _____% of rest, residue and remainder of my estate to the Shakespeare Oxford Society (d/b/a the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of New York.

A Payable on Death (POD) Account at your Bank

By far the easiest and quickest way to make a planned gift to the SOF is by a “Payable On Death” (POD) account at your financial institution. This can be a new account opened for this purpose, or an existing account for which you change the beneficiary to the SOF. You will continue to retain complete control of the account during your lifetime, adding or withdrawing funds at will. After your death, the remaining funds will go to the beneficiary without probate. These accounts used to be known as Totten Trusts. Banks have forms already printed up for these accounts. The forms ask for the following information:

Name: Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship,
Address: P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466,
Tax Identification number: 13-6105314.

IRA and Retirement Plan Assets

A donor can name the SOF as the designated beneficiary of a retirement plan such as an IRA, 401(k) or 403(b). This is an effective way to make a charitable gift since it is not subject to estate or income taxes, which would be incurred if the funds were left to someone other than a spouse.

Life Insurance

For many of us there comes a time when a life insurance policy that was necessary years ago is no longer needed. Such policies are ideal charitable gifts. One makes a gift of

life insurance by irrevocably designating the SOF as the owner and beneficiary of the policy. Paid up policies (i.e., where there are no more premiums payable) work best. A donor can also name the SOF as a partial or contingent beneficiary of a policy on the donor’s life while retaining ownership of the policy.

Charitable Gift Annuity

This type of gift allows the donor to make a charitable gift and still receive income. The donor (and possibly others) may receive immediate or deferred income through this arrangement. Age and amount limitations apply, so it will most certainly require the participation of the donor’s professional advisor, but it does allow the donor to support the SOF, receive an immediate charitable income tax deduction, and lock in fixed, partially tax-free payments for life.

Charitable Remainder/Lead Trusts

The donor can realize the tax advantages of making a gift now—especially of appreciated assets—while still receiving income from the assets through a charitable remainder or charitable lead trust. With a charitable remainder trust, after providing income to the donor (and possibly others) during one’s lifetime, the remaining assets are donated to the SOF.

With a charitable lead trust, the gift “leads” in the sense that the trust distributes income to the SOF for a period of years or during the donor’s lifetime at which point the remaining assets return to the surviving family members.

Securities

A gift of securities (e.g., stocks, bonds or mutual funds) offers a number of advantages including significant tax savings. If the securities have appreciated and have been held for at least twelve months, you can donate them to the SOF while deducting their full fair market value. To avoid a capital gains tax, it is necessary to donate the securities themselves rather than to sell them and donate the cash.

SOF Legacy Society. In 2016, we announced the formation of the SOF Legacy Society to provide lifetime recognition to those who have included the SOF in their estate plans. **If you have arranged for a planned gift to the SOF by any of the methods described above, please let us know about it at info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.**

Again, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the above addresses.



Volunteer Profile

Abstracting Oxford: Catherine Hatinguais and SOAR

by Kathryn Sharpe, Chair, SOF Data Preservation Committee

SOAR (Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources) is a valuable, yet little-known, database being built and improved by Bill Boyle (a librarian who envisioned, created, and manages all aspects of the database), James Warren (a researcher who is significantly expanding its listings) and Catherine Hatinguais (a terminology expert who is writing summaries, or “abstracts,” of articles). The 4,800 records presently in SOAR are, in effect, an online, searchable version of Warren’s *Index to Oxfordian Publications*, with further information provided for many entries, such as abstracts, subject access, and links to the actual articles.

This profile is an interview with Catherine Hatinguais that examines her work and explains why SOAR matters to Oxfordians. Through her work on SOAR, Catherine learned about and joined the SOF’s Data Preservation Committee, which is working on the future preservation and accessibility of Oxfordian research (including blog posts and articles).



Catherine Hatinguais

Catherine, how did you discover SOAR?

My involvement with SOAR started in Spring 2015 when I contacted Bill Boyle after moving to the Boston area. I hoped to visit, volunteer for, and borrow from the Oxfordian library advertised on the website of the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library (NESOL) (<http://www.shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org/>) so I could delve deeper into the authorship question and meet local Oxfordians. Bill told me about the SOAR database project. I offered to work on it, and he suggested writing abstracts. It seemed a good fit for my skills and interests: I had spent years as a terminologist and researcher for the United Nations language services, and writing abstracts would allow me to get familiar with Oxfordian research and literature.

A well-prepared abstract has been called “the most important single paragraph in an article,” both for authors who want their work read and cited, and for readers who want to know, quickly, what the article covers. How did working at the UN prepare you to write abstracts?

I started working at the UN as a translator (English and Spanish into French) and précis writer (taking notes and condensing delegates’ speeches by about two-thirds). Later, I became a terminologist. This meant, among other research tasks, building bilingual (English-French) glossaries in technical fields where the UN was active but where there were no dictionaries commercially available. I identified sources, read a massive amount of materials on a given subject, (first in English, then French), extracted terms and—using context, illustrations, explanations from specialists—wrote up a definition and a substantive explanatory note for each term in both languages. It also required me to formulate appropriate subject tags for each database record as the subject headings of the Library of Congress and Dewey system proved useless for our purposes.

This is the process that prepared me to write up abstracts for SOAR and to think about the related issue of standardized tags for the Shakespeare authorship question: I have done it for years, in slightly different circumstances and under different constraints.

Clearly you are more than qualified for the job! How is the work going?

Over the last two years I have written about 300 abstracts for articles dealing with historical research items and with insights into Shakespeare’s works and their connections to Edward de Vere’s life. I started with *Shakespeare Matters* and am now halfway through the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*. I read each issue cover to cover, strictly in chronological order, to get a sense of the historical sweep of Oxfordian research and to better follow the exchanges and controversies straddling successive newsletters.

What is your focus?

I focus exclusively on substantive articles and ignore obituaries, housekeeping notes and meeting agendas, letters to the editor, book reviews, conference reports and accounts of the authorship wars: these can be dealt with later. I feel strongly that substantive points and ideas raised by various authors in past newsletters are the most promising: they deserve to be highlighted first, saved

from oblivion (I have reached an age where oblivion is very much on my mind!), and passed on to the next generation of Oxfordian researchers, for them to either confirm or—just as importantly—refute.

How do you find the articles to abstract?

Because I must proceed chronologically and systematically, I use Jim Warren's *Index to Oxfordian Publications* and the SOF website publication archive as my entry point (not SOAR) to download or print the newsletters on which to work. The SOAR website is my working interface with Bill, where I submit completed abstracts as well as excerpts I select to supplement them.

I do not look for any topic but let each newsletter guide (and teach) me. I most enjoy articles that are well argued and structured and are clearly written, as it makes my job much easier, but it is often the little nuggets, those flashes of insight or new, occasionally wild, ideas found in shorter articles that I find most thrilling: it is as if they suddenly opened a door. Obviously, most of those ideas are not going to pan out upon further investigation, but meanwhile, the chase is on!

Is this the best way for the rest of us to find articles of interest?

For a newcomer to the Oxfordian idea, it's fine to browse the newsletters on the SOF or other websites to get acquainted with the variety of issues at stake. But if a more focused reader or a researcher wants to find what has already been written by Oxfordians on a specific topic, SOAR is the way to go. For example, go to <http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/home.php>, and in LIBRARY NAME enter "SOAR". No password needed. Then enter a search term, e.g., "Cornwallis," and the catalog entries displayed will provide the full bibliographic reference and a link to the articles of interest (if in digital format), or an indication of where to find them (if in hard copy). Since this is not a "full-text search" (meaning the texts of the articles themselves are not indexed), SOAR will pull up for you only the articles for which your search term appears in either the title, the author's name, or the subject tags.

What information do you put in an abstract?

I try to include as many specific details as possible, and not simply the gist of the argument, to give an idea of the riches contained in the article and entice the reader to go to the full article. We have a suggested limit of 100 words for the abstract, but there's no limit for the excerpts.

At some point will you show other volunteers how to write abstracts for SOAR?

Bill or I can show potential volunteers the mechanics of tagging, excerpting, hot-linking, etc. As for writing abstracts, they would need to have already mastered the basic skill, as this cannot be

taught overnight and requires practice. Looking forward, the abstracts should be submitted by the authors themselves, along with their article, freeing us and the other volunteers to do the uploading, tagging, linking of every article in SOAR, a massive undertaking in and of itself.

As you do your work, are you finding any treasures?

Yes, and not always in the long articles. Although Bill suggested I focus on the articles over three pages long, on several occasions I wrote abstracts of shorter ones that seemed to open a lead for further research or threw light on a small, but intriguing, historical detail, on a character, a word, or a poetic passage in Shakespeare's works. For example:

- Craig Huston in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*: Vol. 9/1 (Winter 1973) mentions the presence of a silver ewer at the Rosenbach Museum in Philadelphia, which had been given—along with a silver basin—by the Queen to Oxford in 1578. The ewer and basin are mentioned in *Timon*, Act III, sc. 1. [Editor's note: see article on pages 5-6 of this issue.]
- Stephanie Caruana in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*: Vol. 26/2 (Spring 1990) discusses the possible intent of the word "true-penny," found in *Hamlet*, based on the meanings of the family names Vere and Trussell.
- Linda McLatchie in the same issue links the *lanternes des morts*, found mostly in central France, and *Romeo and Juliet* Act V, sc. 3. Could Oxford really have seen those graveyard monuments and later used the memory in his play? I have since started to research this issue.
- Michael Cecil's article "William Cecil and Shakespeare: revisiting the 1st Baron Burghley's Precepts," in *Shakespeare Matters*: Vol. 9/3 (Fall 2010).

The newsletters are littered with these little gems, worth digging for, whether they turn out in the end to be true gold or simple pyrite... (echoes of Frobisher's expedition here!). In our effort to establish Oxford as Shakespeare, it is as important to disprove and discard erroneous ideas as to prove or strengthen our better hypotheses. In either case, we will end up on firmer ground.

You've read hundreds of articles; do you have any favorites?

At the intersection of the Stratfordian-Oxfordian wars, the visual arts of the Elizabethan age, and the authorship deception, one topic fascinates me: the Ashbourne portrait. Barbara Burris's articles in *Shakespeare Matters* (2002) introduced me to the appalling, deceitful treatment of the painting by the Folger, and ever since I have hoped for a book to come out on that story!

I particularly enjoy articles on Shakespeare and Italy, such as Earl Showerman's piece on Gaspar Ribeiro in *Shakespeare Matters*: Vol. 10/3 (Summer 2011). I am also fascinated by the "Golding" translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (see: Robert R.

Prechter, Jr., in *Shakespeare Matters*: Vol. 07/1 [Fall 2007]): I am convinced the young de Vere is the translator, not his Puritan uncle. The young and exuberant voice is unmistakably that of the future poet—racy, passionate and infinitely creative with language—not that of a Calvinist moralist.

In general, what can you say about what you've read and learned?

Looking back on what I have learned so far through those readings, apart from the various lines of evidence and the details of Oxford's biography, what stands out for me are two trends or general impressions.

First, up through the 1980s the long, exhausting, and often dispiriting struggle of Oxfordians to break down the Stratfordian wall comes through clearly in the early newsletters. But the mood starts to shift in the 1990s. Is it the historic *Frontline* broadcast on PBS that renewed public interest in the authorship question? Is it the birth of the internet, which allows us to connect and exchange ideas more easily, as well as bypass the academic blockade to reach a new audience? I don't know for sure, and the battle is clearly not won. What is clear is that Stratfordians seem to know that, despite their massive resources and their lock on media, publishing, and teaching institutions, they are losing ground. They are worried and Oxfordians have noticed—hence, a certain uplift in mood, a rising self-confidence and combativeness in the Oxfordian camp.

Second, not only has the quantity and variety of research dramatically increased, but the quality of Oxfordian publications has greatly improved: articles are more professionally written, and are better sourced and annotated than in earlier decades. This is not meant as a criticism of our predecessors: we are, after all, building on achievements *they* secured despite having almost no resources. But many Oxfordians have also learned and applied the conventions of scholarly writing, and it shows.

How are you feeling about Edward de Vere?

As regards Oxford, I am fascinated by this brilliant, complex and contradictory character, praised and loved by writers and artists for his generosity as a patron, his wit and his talent as a poet and musician; despised by many people of his own class; a favorite at court, then a recluse; maligned by some, protected by others, and now wholly erased from history. What happened? Why?

In my work for the SOAR project, I am moved, now more than ever, by a deep sense of injustice: not only was he deprived of the credit due to him for authoring Shakespeare's works, but he is now the target of a preemptive campaign of character assassination by the Stratfordian establishment. It is simply vile.

Can you point us some of your abstracts?

To access SOAR, go to <http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/home.php>, and in LIBRARY NAME enter "SOAR". No password needed. Then in the search box at the top, you can enter:

- "SM2002 Ashbourne," to find a series of records on the Ashbourne portrait published in *Shakespeare Matters* in 2002.

- "SM2007 Prechter," to find his article "A Deeper Look at the Arthur Golding Canon."
- "abstract ch," to find all the abstracts I wrote that Bill has uploaded so far.

Why do we need SOAR? Is it really that important? Why doesn't doing a Google search get you the same results?

A Google keyword search remains indispensable if you wish to throw a wide net to include all instances of a word or name. But it also gives many irrelevant results, e.g., articles mentioning your keyword only in passing or in a totally unrelated context. It offers many rabbit holes and dead ends. And Google will not give you old (pre-digital age!) Oxfordian articles, which were scanned for SOAR in image format and are thus not indexable by the Google search engine. If you wish to narrow your search to Oxfordian publications, SOAR, with its professional catalog, has the potential to cut through the clutter and save time, a bit like a good reference librarian.

Without established and stable institutions and steady, reliable funding, Oxfordian research and researchers remain at a disadvantage when challenging well-funded Stratfordian academics. The internet somewhat levels the playing field and Oxfordians have begun to build, if not a physical "home," at least a virtual one. The SOF (and DVS in the UK), with its website and annual conferences, is one place where they can exchange ideas and discoveries. Facebook postings and blogs are also invaluable. But that is not enough. We need a permanent repository or a central "hub"—a one-stop shop directing traffic and facilitating access to all Oxfordian published materials, which can be used both by our researchers and by the public interested in the authorship question. I see SOAR as the main gateway to this—our!—treasure house.

What is the future of SOAR?

Bill has done an enormous amount of work on the database since 2009, with limited funding from occasional donations made to his New England Shakespeare Oxford Library site. What Jim Warren, with his index, and Bill, with SOAR, have accomplished is just astounding, and it is a shame not more people know about it. I am delighted to see that the SOF is now ready to step up and help maintain and publicize the SOAR database and maybe take it to the next level.

Ideally, we would love to see the SOAR archives expanded to include more articles collected in a single, central database, along with blog posts, out-of-print digitized books, etc., for which the SOF holds a copyright or obtains the necessary authorization. The technical, legal and cybersecurity issues involved here are formidable, but worth exploring. This is all much further down the line.

In the near term, it is urgent to develop a systematic tagging system for the SOAR catalog to facilitate searches. This is an enormously complex and difficult task: how detailed and "granular" to be, what type of tags to include (Historical proper names and/or titles? Geographical names? Literary cliques or disputes? Historical events? Published titles of Elizabethan authors only? Other classical and European Renaissance writers?

In modern or original spelling?); how to standardize the tags themselves so that they can be reliably used in a search? All this is being discussed and must be finalized.

In addition, we hope one day to integrate those keyword/tags within a future expansion of the subject heading classification system of the Library of Congress (LoC) to include authorship or Oxfordian studies (should it become feasible to work or negotiate with the LoC). At present this system, controlled by the LoC, ignores Oxfordian publications, rendering them “invisible” in libraries.

Where can I learn more about SOAR?

See:

- Bill Boyle’s introduction to the SOAR catalog (including how to use it), go to <http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/home.php>, and in LIBRARY NAME enter “SOAR”. No password needed.

And these articles by Linda Theil:

- “Warren releases third edition of comprehensive index of Oxfordian research” (2/24/2015) <http://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/warren-releases-third-edition-of-comprehensive-index-of-oxfordian-research/>
- “Warren creates index of Oxfordian newsletter and journal articles” (9/7/2011): <http://oberonshakespearestudygroup.blogspot.com/2011/09/warren-creates-index-of-oxfordian.html>
- “Oxfordian Research Repository” (1/21/2010): <http://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/oxfordian-research-repository/>



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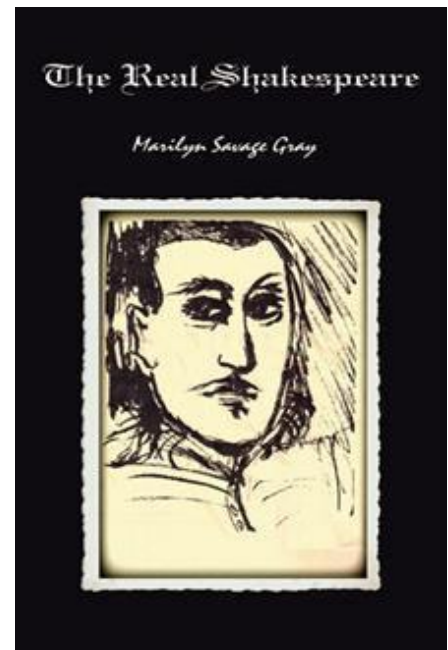
The Real Shakespeare

by Marilyn Savage Gray

This book proves that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote the plays we know as “Shakespearean.” In the play “Hamlet,” in a very special coded way, he signed his name “Ver” hundreds of times. These clues in “Hamlet” provide the stamp of his authorship! All of the Shakespearean plays and sonnets reflect incidents in the life of Edward de Vere. The real events in his life involved violence, intrigue and love—and some of them were shocking! In a web of conjecture those incidents have been tied together in a novel about de Vere. This novel is one of the main parts of this book. The other two parts are the proof!

“Reading this book felt like rummaging in a treasure trove and delighting in the finds. The author presents us with compelling and mesmerizing pieces of evidence hidden craftily in the lines of ‘Hamlet’ offering proof that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote most of the works attributed to Shakespeare. As an English literature major, I was in awe of this discovery as I had only been aware of the Marlovian theory. Not only was I immensely impressed with Marilyn Gray’s mesmerizing contribution to the theory of the Oxfordian authorship of Shakespeare’s plays, but also with the wealth of information she provided on some of the well-known, as well as some more obscure events that shaped the history of the Elizabethan times. I also enjoyed the pieces of bountiful and delicious court intrigue strewn among the arguments supporting de Vere’s authorship. What kept me riveted and amazed the most was the re-interpretation of the meaning in the prose and verses in ‘Hamlet’ that took me by complete surprise. As someone who has always been fascinated by Shakespeare’s works and the worlds he created, I am grateful to have read a book that added a new dimension to this experience and understanding. A revelatory and most enjoyable read!”

- Jana Begovic



Book Reviews

Shakespeare's Wilderness by David Rains Wallace (2017, self-published)

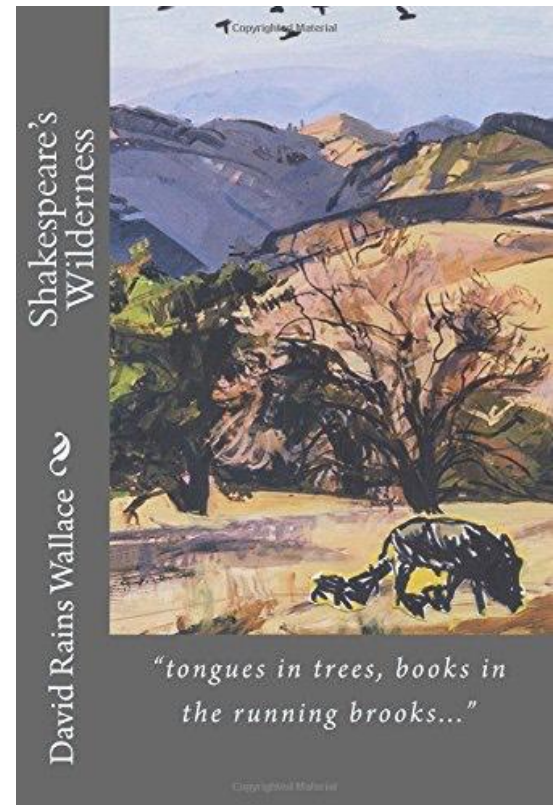
Reviewed by Mark Anderson

It is a frustrating if still understandable bind today to be writing for us post-Stratfordian readers. We may be few in number, but word-wise, we're a hungry lot. We buy books by the pound, and we tend to actually read them. That's all good news for the scribbler who lashes himself or herself to the mast, braves the critical winds and waves as a booster of one Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford as the likely author of the works of "Shakespeare."

Nevertheless, Oxfordian authors remain also in a bit of a pickle. Oxfordians and post-Stratfordians are a subculture with our own prerequisite curriculum that must be covered before getting to whatever Shakespearean matter it is we want to discuss. To write a book for all readers that discusses Oxfordian and post-Stratfordian views means first writing some introductory chapters that lay out at least a basic case against William Shakspeare of Stratford and for the alternative candidate. That is often covered at the beginning of the book, when readers have the least investment in any of these unorthodox approaches to Shakespeare, which are what again? And what about that Shakespeare guy, did he know this other fellow was using his name? And didn't some professor say these heretics are just crazy anyway? And...? Is it any wonder the post-Stratfordian crowd has difficulty writing books for the wider world?

Alternatively, one could do what David Rains Wallace has done in his masterpiece of a hybrid work of literary criticism and natural history, *Shakespeare's Wilderness*. Wallace dives right in, full fathom five. Within the first couple pages he's already out exploring words and the natural world in equal measure. His first explicit mention of the Earl of Oxford and the Shakespeare authorship problem doesn't come until page 143, only after Wallace has considered portions of Shakespeare's natural world as well as (in no particular order) *Beowulf*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the journals and poems of Sylvia Plath, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *The Wasteland*, *The Jungle Book*, Francis Bacon on nature, grizzly bears at Denali National Park, James Boswell and Samuel Johnson, and various statements about the Bard from Alexander Pope, John Milton, W.H. Auden, Harold Bloom, "Anthony" Bate (it's Jonathan, but who's complaining?), Henry David Thoreau, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Some readers may have already given up on this book just seeing the smorgasbord of diverse gleanings and pickings listed above. In less capable hands, a work of



literary criticism even half as eclectic as *Shakespeare's Wilderness* would still be too scattershot.

But Wallace has seized on a bronco of a thesis statement, and he's masterfully following it through the entire Western Canon. This, in fact, is the best part: *Shakespeare's Wilderness* is also the comprehensive, post-Stratfordian response to one of the most ambitious and enigmatic works of Stratfordian literary criticism of the past half-century: Ted Hughes's 1992 book, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*.

Hughes, a Poet Laureate of England, was a mercurial figure dogged by allegations of mistreatment of his first wife, the poet Sylvia Plath, whom he left as he took up with his mistress. Yet, Hughes was a brilliant poet in his own right, and demonstrated a piercing insight into the Shakespeare canon in *Shakespeare and the Goddess* that is at times awe-inspiring — tracing a single through-line across much of the plays and poems that Hughes leadingly called the "tragic equation" — albeit at times frustrating because of its unquestioning adherence to the Stratford paradigm.

Wallace challenges Hughes throughout *Shakespeare's Wilderness*, and gleans as much insight from it as any Oxfordian who's ever wrestled with *Shakespeare and the Goddess* might have hoped. For example, Wallace devotes a good dozen pages to the pursuit of Hughes's autobiography in *Shakespeare and the Goddess*. The "tragic equation" that Hughes was so obsessed with discovering in the greatest English author's canon, in

other words, may have partly traced back to the marital and extramarital tragedies that defined Hughes's own life.

It is Hughes's autobiography in his own Shakespeare book — juxtaposed with Hughes's dogged refusal to acknowledge the role autobiography plays in great authors' writings — that launches Wallace into the consideration of William Shakspeare's meager documentary record and the incongruous life story one finds in the "Shakespeare" canon. Emblematic of his omnibus approach, at one point Wallace takes an aside to flay the Stratfordian argument that Oxfordians are like Biblical creationists. And this is from a natural historian who knows his Darwin! (Wallace is a prominent author in the fields of natural history and conservation, and winner of the John Burroughs Medal for Nature Writing.)

Plenty of other gems line the 262 pages of *Shakespeare's Wilderness*. I love Wallace's quip that James Shapiro's recent anti-Oxfordian book had the right words in its title, only the wrong emphasis. Its correct punctuation, he says, is *Contested Will, Who Wrote Shakespeare!*

Wallace elsewhere lays out a Thoreau quote that was new to these eyes, grappling with the insufficiency of the Stratford storyline. ("We want the basis of fact, of an actual life, to complete our Shakespeare, as much as a statue wants its pedestal," the Bard of Concord, Mass., writes [emphasis mine].) Wallace also brilliantly repurposes an Edmund Wilson quote about Sophocles to attack those (Wilson included) who also criticize anyone who questions the paucity of the Stratford documentary record. ("So great was the need of humanity to believe in a human intellect all-self-controlled and all-wise that there... had [been created] what men of letters, what all mankind, had desired: a writer superhuman and humanly impossible, a writer who could never have existed.")

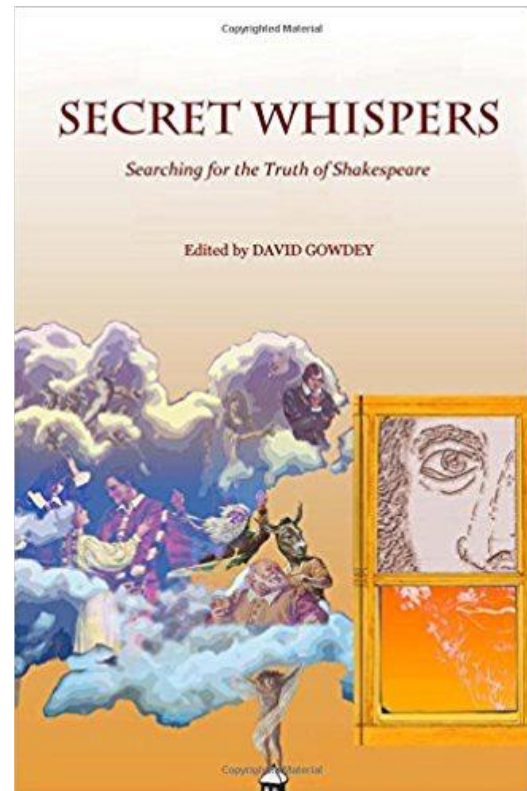
In one of Wallace's many considerations of Hughes, he lights on what could be the topic sentence for the whole book. "If he had noticed Lord Boar," Wallace writes, using a cheeky moniker he sometimes deploys for Oxford, "Hughes could have found food for thought."

Thankfully, we now have that banquet's worth of food. And it's a feast for anyone who enjoys Edward de Vere, Shakespeare, and the wide-ranging world that opens up for those who dare pursue the "actual life" of an author through the wilderness of his actual words.

***Secret Whispers: Searching for the Truth of Shakespeare*, edited by David Gowdey (Traveler Books, 2017)**

Reviewed by Bonner Miller Cutting

When *Secret Whispers* arrived in the mail, I looked over the index and was a bit disappointed that it was mostly made up of material I thought I already knew. Many of my favorite writers on the authorship subject were there, but as an "old timer," I didn't see much value in revisiting



well-trodden ground. After reading this book cover to cover, I realize my initial impression was wrong.

Editor and compiler David Gowdey opens *Secret Whispers* with a Preface and closes with an Afterword. In these commentaries, he reflects on the issues of the Shakespeare Authorship Question and gives an overview of the political and religious controversies that impacted the theatrical culture in the Elizabethan era. Between these editorial bookends are twenty essays on various aspects of the authorship question. Gowdey does not explain why he chose these particular essays from the multitude of worthy offerings, which now number in the thousands. But what he chose packs a wallop.

Nothing could better set the stage for an authorship book than the chart from Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*, in which she postulated ten criteria to corroborate someone's existence as a writer (e.g., evidence of education, existence of letters, possession of books, recognition as a writer during his lifetime, etc.) and compared Will Shakspeare of Stratford to two dozen literary contemporaries; the median score among the contemporaries was six, the lowest was three, and Shakspeare trailed the entire field with zero. Price's chart is followed by Mark Twain's *Is Shakespeare Dead?* Strangely, there are literary experts who can't bring themselves to acknowledge that this sharp critique of the Stratford "conjecturers" is part of Twain's *oeuvre*. But it is a classic in authorship studies, as fresh and funny as it was when it was first published in 1909. Next, Ramon Jiménez's "Ten Eyewitnesses Who Saw Nothing" brings the reader back to the time contemporaneous with the author's life, a time when no one who surely knew the Stratford man left a record of him as a writer. Sir George

Greenwood's early 20th century observations brought the authorship question to mainstream attention, and Greenwood debated the most eminent Shakespeare authorities of the time (Gowdey notes that Greenwood also cofounded the Shakespeare Fellowship with J.T. Looney in 1922).

There are transcripts from authorship events that are obtainable from different sources on the internet, but a strength of this book is to have them collected in one place. Gowdey does not neglect to give space to Stratfordians Alan Nelson and Duncan Salkeld in the Ye Olde Cock Pub Debate in 2014. It is for the reader to decide if Ros Barber, Alexander Waugh and William Leahy hold their own in that debate. In Renee Montagne's 2016 NPR interview, Shakespearean actors Sir Derek Jacobi and Mark Rylance discuss the evidence that led them to doubt the traditional attribution of authorship to the Stratford man, and they share their personal experiences with the pushback that sadly comes with publicly addressing the authorship question. A surprise inclusion is an interview with Rylance in 1994 when he became the first Artistic Director of the new Globe Theatre.

It is also nice to have at one's fingertips the transcripts of several recent Oxfordian presentations. Tom Regnier's talk on "Circumstantial Evidence," Don Rubin's paper "Sisyphus and the Globe," and Keir Cutler's YouTube video "Crackpot to Mainstream" all contain important information for authorship discussions and are entertaining as well. Interesting too is the juxtaposition of Oxfordian writings (for example, Hank Whittemore on Richard Roe's *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*) with essays supporting other candidates. We find excerpts from Ros Barber's award-winning poetic novel on Christopher Marlowe, and an interview with Sabrina Feldman about her book *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare*. In addition, Gowdey has excerpted passages from Gilbert Slater's *The Seven Shakespeares*, which advocated a group of authors. It is good to have the latter book, published in 1931, called to our attention, as Slater's multi-authorship theory has, in a way, come to dominate orthodox Stratfordian conversation under the rubric of "collaboration."

An unexpected entry is a section from Henry James's short story *The Birthplace*. James was a prominent literary figure in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and his statement of doubt about the authorship question is often quoted. Although published in 1903, James's satire of the deception surrounding "Shakespeare's" birthplace could have been written yesterday. I found the parts of it republished here one of the highlights of *Secret Whispers*.

It might be thought that so many essays covering such a wide range of authorship topics—spanning over a hundred years of scholarship, research, arguments and debate—might turn into a meaningless hodgepodge, canceling each other out. Yet each selection has been

judiciously chosen to play an important role in the explication of the authorship puzzle. Some entries are well known, and others—like Michael Delahoyde's "On Being Wrong" and Warren Hope's tribute to the early Oxfordian Craig Huston—are not as widely distributed. In making these diverse materials readily available, David Gowdey has served the authorship question well.

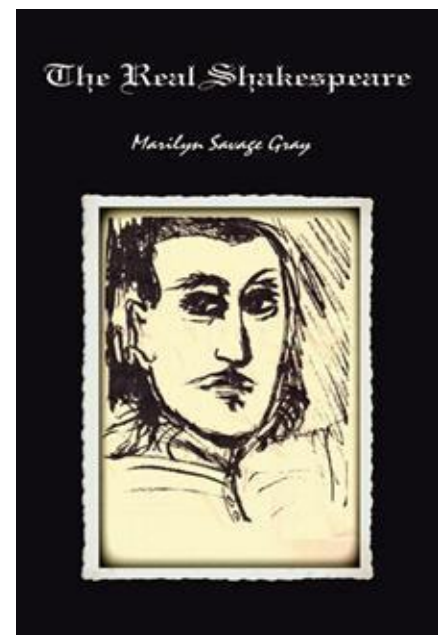
The Real Shakespeare by Marilyn Savage Gray (Revised Edition, 2015)

Reviewed by Dorothea Dickerman

Whether Oxfordian or Stratfordian, everyone who writes about the author of the 154 sonnets, 38 plays and two long poems known as the Shakespeare Canon intends to convey a message to a particular audience for a particular purpose. Whether that message is received by the intended reader, and how it is perceived, depends on the skill of the writer in targeting her audience and in writing convincingly to that target. Some readers will be familiar with the writer's topic; others will be complete strangers. Some readers will be astute, highly sophisticated and educated; others may be casual and occasional readers, consumers of supermarket novels or adolescents. Some readers will search for concrete information relevant to their own course of study; other readers seek only to be entertained. An inaccurately targeted book risks missing its mark.

Marilyn Savage Gray's *The Real Shakespeare* first appeared in print in 2001 and was reviewed by Steven M. Aucella in the Fall 2002 edition of *Shakespeare Matters*.

At the end of his review, Aucella recommended that certain editing, typographic and factual errors be addressed prior to a second printing. My review speaks only to the second edition of *The Real Shakespeare*, published again under the iUniverse label in September of 2015. Ms. Gray passed away in 2006, presumably before that editing work could be completed. The



resulting second edition is the painstaking labor of her husband, William Gray, and her daughter, Kathleen Marusak, who also sketched the portrait of Edward de Vere that appears on the front cover. As such, it is a monument of love and honor to the late Marilyn Gray.

As the book's introduction and preface both outline several times, *The Real Shakespeare* contains distinct parts. Intriguing reproductions of relevant pages of Claude Desainlien's 1593 *Dictionary of French and English* and of Henry Bynneman's 1571 *A Dictionarie French and English* precede the book's dedication, acknowledgements, introduction and preface, which explain that Ms. Gray took Sonnet 76's words quite literally regarding *Hamlet*: "Why write I still all one, ever the same,/ And keep invention in a noted weed,/ That every word doth almost tell my name,/ Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?" She believed that *Hamlet* contains what she calls "strange" or *ver* words—words that catch readers' eyes in a vaguely disquieting way, and that those words are French in origin and play on the author's name. Part Two of the book references five French-English Renaissance dictionaries, Desainlien's and Bynneman's mentioned above, as well as John Baret's *An Alueraire or Quadruple Dictionarie* (1580), Randle Cotgrave's *A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* (1611), and Claudius Hollyband's *The Treasurie of the French Tong* (1580). Using these five dictionaries, which she states were available during or just after the lifetime of Edward de Vere, she makes her case that the author of *Hamlet* buried his name hundreds of times in the text of the play. She believes that de Vere purposefully used these dictionaries and their now obscure French words in *Hamlet*, in addition to the English words *every*, *ever*, *never*, *true*, *truth*, and *worm*, which are commonly seen (at least by Oxfordians) as de Vere embedding his name in his works with references to it and puns on it in the texts.

These sections of the book, comprising about 100 pages and respectively subtitled "Part Two: The Ver Words and Their Corresponding Strange English Words in the Play *Hamlet*," and "Part Three: Strange English Words in the Play *Hamlet* and Their Corresponding French Ver Words," cite these *ver* words in two indices: one organized by each of the five contemporaneous French-English dictionaries with cross-references to the act and scene in the text of *Hamlet* as found on the website: <http://www.Shakespeare-Navigators.com>, the other in the order of act and scene in which they appear in *Hamlet*, quote by quote, with Ms. Gray's interpretation and analysis of the corresponding *ver* word referenced in the text. This organization makes the analysis convenient for scholarly readers to follow and to check cites. Ms. Gray's thorough analysis of each English word often starts with Webster's modern English dictionary and proceeds from there to the French *ver* word, sometimes by a direct route, and sometimes indirectly or obtusely.

For example, in I.iii.101, Polonius speaks to Ophelia: "Affections! Pooh! you speak like a green girl, unsifted in such perilous circumstances." It is not difficult to agree with Ms. Gray that the English word *green* is related to its Old French cousin *verdant* (citation via Webster's) meaning "unripe in knowledge or judgment, unsophisticated," and thus to appreciate her insightful citation of Cotgrave that defines *verdelet* as "a tender, delicate pear called the 'greening.'" She has teased out many *ver* words in this manner: the English *closet* is *verducade* per Cotgrave ("She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed") and *verrouil* is a bolt for a door ("You do surely bar the door upon your own liberty") (both spoken by Rosencrantz in III.ii). Ms. Gray also pursues more complicated and dynamic analyses. For example, in I.i.39, Bernardo's "the bell then beating one" suggests to Ms. Gray an "incongruous, inappropriate," or *ver* word. Suspicions are aroused because a bell may *strike* or *ring*, but it does not *beat*. Further, "beating" is generally used to indicate more than one blow, not the single stroke of one o'clock. As a result, she finds "beating" to be a *ver* word, hears in it *verberation*, which (again citing Webster's) she defines as "a verberating, a beating, or striking, the impulse of a body which causes sound." She goes further, finding without explanation that *verberation* has a relationship to *verrier*, a glass covering per the Cotgrave 1611 dictionary, and thus to her a possible allusion to a glass bell. The glass bell comment seems to be an unrelated aside. However, the *verrier* reference turns up again in Ms. Gray's analysis. In I.ii.180-181, Hamlet's famous "Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables" means to Ms. Gray, "Something hot enough to bake one to death is a furnace for melting glass, a Verrier, Cotgrave," an analysis which, among others, left me puzzled. Nevertheless, these sections of the book, with the explanation found in the introduction and preface and the reproductions of the pages of the contemporaneous French-English dictionaries cited above, make for interesting reading for the Early Modern scholar.

The longer first section of *The Real Shakespeare*, subtitled "Part One: Vere, a Historical Novel About the Life of Edward de Vere," appears to have been written for a totally different reader. The original text loosely stitches together long quotations from the plays and the sonnets with a healthy number of facts about de Vere's life, all footnoted faithfully to other authors, mostly Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, Ward's *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, Looney's *Shakespeare Identified* and Miller's *Oxfordian Vistas*, tied together by enthusiastic prose full of drama and exclamation points. As a result, the style gives the impression that Part One was aimed at a less sophisticated reader. The quotations from the Canon, alternating with the story line and footnotes, lend a term paper quality to the writing, perhaps targeted to

a high school or middle school reader and replete with coy, age-appropriate fig leaves of noble self-sacrifice as explanations for the racier scenes in de Vere's life. Some passages, such as the description of the Spanish Armada's approach and the English rebuff of the attack, flow well, transporting us to the scene, while others are pages of short single-sentence paragraphs, punctuated more than occasionally by the first person singular writer ("I") jumping into the story from the wings to tell the reader her opinion on what "really happened." There is even a reference to an Oprah Winfrey show as evidence of a "fact" to bolster the author's conclusions. Perhaps this unexpected juxtaposition of styles is the result of writing and editing by different hands.

As a result, *The Real Shakespeare* appears to be written for two discrete sets of readers: one attuned to the nuanced scholarly work Ms. Gray and her patient editors put into the *ver* words sections of the book; the other accustomed to easy-to-read adventure stories, with bursts of imagined dialogue and conclusions to give color to the long Canon quotes, and perhaps also to tuning into Oprah now and again to take a break from too much Eng. Lit. The book may have been conceived to engage a reader generally familiar with the Canon with an exciting tale and then to "prove" the de Vere case to them with the research, but it is doubtful that the adventure reader would have the patience for the scholarly work, or vice versa.

However, both halves of *The Real Shakespeare* have real value. There are a great many high school and middle school level readers out there who need to experience boring old Shakespeare coming alive as Edward de Vere, which he does in Part One; that section also has citations to other authors whose works they can later explore as more mature readers. And there are serious scholars who would benefit from some of Ms. Gray's research and insights in Parts Two and Three. But these two types of readers are not likely to be reading the same book. Split into two publications, and targeted to two different audiences, *The Real Shakespeare* would be not "still all one," but could become two veritable works.

***Shakespeare, Court Dramatist* by Richard Dutton
(Oxford University Press, 2016, 321 pp.)**

Reviewed by Earl Showerman

In 2016 Oxford University Press (OUP) released its radical *New Oxford Shakespeare*, whose editors employed stylometric algorithms to attribute an expanded forty-four plays to the Shakespeare canon, including seventeen they argue were written in collaboration with other dramatists. In the same year, OUP published another volume that departs from traditional scholarly consensus: *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist* by Richard Dutton,

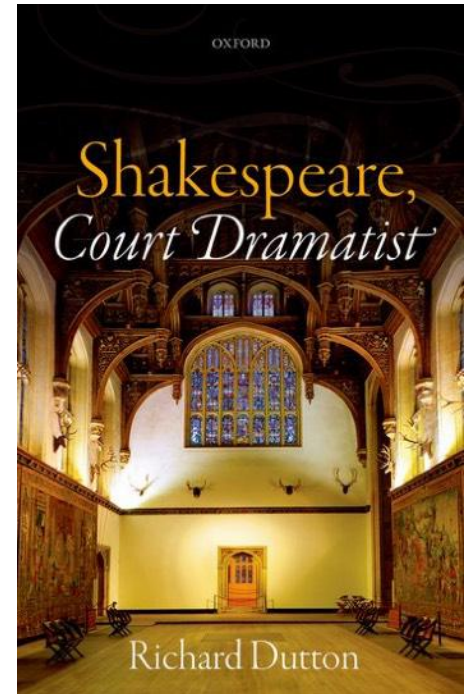
Professor Emeritus of English at Ohio State University (Dutton formerly taught at Lancaster University in England).

Dutton contends that the royal courts of both Elizabeth I and James I played a much greater role in Shakespeare's creative life than is commonly understood, and that the versions of Shakespeare's plays we now have were adapted

for court presentation, where rhetorical enrichment and longer duration dramas were very much appreciated. The multiple states of the play texts, he argues, offer significant insights into the playwright's mode of revising earlier works, a theory he freely admits is a "heresy in influential editorial circles."

Dutton summarizes the various arguments posed to explain the textual variations among the Shakespeare quartos and between the quartos and the First Folio: "We have been told tales of 'bad' quartos, of 'foul papers,' of 'memorial reconstructions' by more-or-less disaffected actors, of piracy by unscrupulous publishers, of performances transcribed by shorthand, of texts shortened for touring productions when plague drove the actors out into the country.... And more recently still we have been told that the shorter versions were expanded, as much by the actors as by Shakespeare. The problem is that we have no hard evidence to substantiate any of these scenarios, though they are often advanced as a given fact."

Dutton cites the documentary evidence that, during the first decade of the 17th century only about ten percent of the income of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the King's Men companies came from payments for productions at court during the Revels seasons. However, Dutton argues effectively that there is ample evidence that the royal court protected the professional companies and provided significant privileges for these "servants of the court." "Pleasing the aristocratic, and especially the courtly, audience was always their first concern. Everything else was, by definition secondary." In essence, Dutton asserts, the court's patronage was the key that "unlocked the players' regular access to the City's paying customers."



Shakespeare, Court Dramatist examines the central role played by Edmund Tilney, Masters of the Revels from 1579 through 1610, and the political influences behind, and effects of, the formation of the Queen's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Dutton provides documentary evidence for the practice of revising plays for productions of the Lord Admiral's Men at court as recorded in Philip Henslowe's diary. He also notes that several Shakespeare quartos included title pages that advertised that the works had been "newly corrected and augmented" or "enlarged." The final chapters of his study focus on six of Shakespeare's plays that exist in shorter quarto editions as well as longer, more polished ones: *Henry V*, *Henry VI Part II* and *Part III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Dutton notes that, during the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, the Lord Chamberlain's Men performed at court on thirty-three occasions, but that only two of their dramatic productions can be identified as written by Shakespeare. During the Jacobean period, however, Revels records show that Shakespeare works comprised one-third of the recorded sixty-six dramas performed at court between 1603 and 1613.

In a Project Muse review of *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist*, Emma Smith recounts the long tradition of imagining Shakespeare to be the man of the people: "Witness those ready analogies with television or Hollywood scriptwriting that were so much in evidence during the 400th anniversary year. Richard Dutton's exhaustively researched investigation of court performance ends with the unsettling find that 'the court is what made Shakespeare "Shakespeare."' It is a radical claim." Smith further notes that there has been surprisingly little prior work on this aspect of Shakespeare's creative process.

Dutton argues that the longer play texts were developed for "more leisurely court presentation, beginning after dinner and stretching into the small hours, punctuated by refreshments." The longer texts have traditionally been claimed to be so-called "literary" versions, "more poetically sophisticated than would have been transmissible in the theatre," but Dutton suggests rather that Shakespeare reworked his plays for the demands of the court, not for the Stationers' Company or for readers. Dutton argues that the earliest quartos are much shorter than those that appeared between 1597 and 1600, and that the latter period "exactly coincides with the sequences in Henslowe's *Diary* which detail Admiral's Men's plays being revised 'for the court.'" Dutton emphasizes that the only reason Henslowe ever gave for a play revision was for a court production.

Shakespeare, Court Dramatist is copiously annotated, with a sixteen-page bibliography, and is indexed by "Offices, Organizations, Events & Editions, Things & Theories," as well as by "Plays and Other Dramatic

Texts" and by "Persons." Dutton writes well; he includes innumerable details related to the role of the Master of the Revels and the documentary records of play productions at court for the period Shakespeare is assumed to be in London. Dutton suggests that the *Henry V* quarto published in 1600 was closely modeled on the anonymous *Famous Victories* play and that only later did Shakespeare expand the play by adding choruses and more rhetorical speeches for court performance. In her review, Emma Smith is clever to point out the topical implications of Dutton's hypothesis. "His version is convincing, even though it requires us to drop two long-held beliefs about *Henry V*'s immediacy in 1599: that the 'wooden O' of the Prologue refers to the newly built Globe theatre, and that the 'general of our gracious Empress' in the chorus to Act 5 is the Earl of Essex. If these are indeed additions for later court performance, they cannot do this topical work."

Margrethe Jolly's book, *The First Two Quartos of Hamlet: A New View of the Origins and Relationship of the Texts*, was published in 2014. Dutton sadly fails to cite it in his extended discussion on this very subject. The theory of authorial revisions that he postulates would have been strongly supported by Jolly's analysis. Both scholars directly challenged the prevailing theory of "memorial reconstruction" for the textual deficiencies of *Hamlet* Q1. Jolly's original insight is that "Q1 is subtly closer than Q2 to *Les Histoires Tragiques*," the primary source for all versions of *Hamlet*. Yet I strongly suspect that Dutton was familiar with Jolly's book, as he begins his chapter on "*Hamlet* and Succession" with a hostile opinion regarding the validity of authorship studies: "The challenge of understanding the relationship between the three surviving texts of *Hamlet* has become almost proverbial; and, like the Shakespeare authorship debate, it is a matter on which unwary amateurs often have a ready opinion."

Another "unwary amateur" Dutton would be loath to cite is Richard Whalen, whose article "Shakespeare's Audience: A Reassessment of the Stratfordian View" (*Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* Vol. 40, No. 4, Fall 2004) gives ample evidence for Shakespeare as a court dramatist in a much more compressed text and with a historical context that Dutton completely neglects. Whalen cites Harvard Professor Alfred Harbage's *Shakespeare's Audience* (1941) as being the first to argue that Shakespeare wrote for the public stage, not the court or private theatres, and that his audiences were comprised primarily of craftsmen, merchants, gentry and officials. The true patrons of the Elizabethan drama, Harbage wrote, were "the anonymous thousands who dropped their pennies in the gatherer's box."

Whalen points out how subsequent Shakespeare scholars and editors have followed Harbage's lead regarding the primacy of Shakespeare's public audience,

including G. Blakemore Evans, David Bevington, Stephen Greenblatt and Andrew Gurr. Whalen wrote, “E.K. Chambers’ view of Shakespeare’s audience is also the conventional view—commoners in a public theatre watching a play written by an actor.” Using Chambers’s own data, Whalen cites records of some thirty performances of Shakespeare plays for aristocratic audiences at court, the private theatres and universities, while there are only twelve recorded performances of Shakespeare plays at the public theatres. Although this sample number is too small to be a reliable measure of performance venues, it is proof at least that the court and the private theatres frequently enjoyed Shakespeare productions.

Whalen identifies several other Shakespeare scholars who have embraced the idea of the court audience being Shakespeare’s primary concern, including Professors Alvin Kernan and Glynne Wickham. Whalen concludes, “That the audience for Shakespeare plays was primarily aristocratic has eluded almost all orthodox Shakespeare scholars. On meager evidence they make the playwright into a man of the public theatre, a commoner writing primarily, if not exclusively, for the groundlings in the pit and the tradesmen in the galleries of the public theatres, especially the Globe.” Whalen’s article is an outstanding review of this important topic and may be accessed here: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp-content/uploads/SO-Newsletter-Summer-2014.c.pdf>.

In his final chapter, Richard Dutton writes that the “once almost-universal conviction that the shorter texts were somehow generated from the longer ones, and then somehow garbled, seems to be based, above all, on bad reading. The shorter texts are not simply the longer ones stripped of unnecessary detail and poetic language. In each case there has been a transformation at the level of plot or dramatic action which can only be accounted for by a purposeful imaginative re-engagement. The idea that such re-engagement went in the direction of stripping complexity, character, theatrical technique, and poetic intensity in such a way as to leave no traces of them (even allowed for the garbling involved in ‘memorial reconstruction’ or stenography) seems to me unthinkable.”

Oxfordians will have no problem appreciating Dutton’s scholarship and agreeing with his conclusions that Shakespeare was the primary court dramatist of his generation, and that many of his plays underwent authorial revision to enhance their poetic beauty and dramatic power. In his concluding sentence Dutton asserts that Shakespeare lived out “‘the core fantasy’ of Puttenham’s *Art of English Poesy* (1589), in which the poet, by the use of all his rhetorical skills, may rise to the service of the monarch.” The professor can be forgiven for failing to note that in the same volume Puttenham praised the Earl of Oxford as an excellent playwright who, among other noblemen, had “written commendably, and suppressed it again, or else suffered it to be published without their own names on it; as if it were a

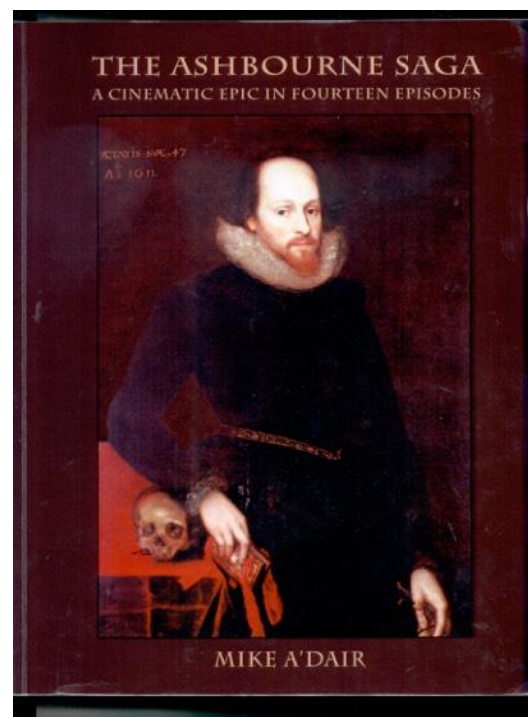
discredit for a gentleman to seem learned.” We learned “amateurs” may revel in Dutton’s discoveries, which further confirm the Oxfordian position that the plays we love were written for the court. At the same time we cannot be naïve about Dutton’s distempered dismissal of the authorship debate.

***The Ashbourne Saga: A Cinematic Epic in Fourteen Episodes* by Mike A’Dair
Willits, CA: Published by Lulu: 2017**

Reviewed by Hank Whittemore

I have often wondered what happened to Charles Wisner Barrell (1885-1974), one of the giant figures of the Oxfordian movement in the first half of the twentieth century. Based in New York City, he was a wide-ranging, in-depth researcher, whose passionate brilliance led him to piece together the evidence of any given subject matter to form an overall picture, which he then delivered in confident and eloquent prose. The man was also prolific. He crafted no less than fifty-nine published pieces of writing (nearly all in the *Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly*) between May 1937 and the autumn of 1948, never skipping a year, and suddenly this output of high energy abruptly ceased. Barrell lived another quarter-century until his death at nearly eighty-nine in 1974, but (with one exception) he never contributed another printed word about Oxford as the great author.

What happened? Did he become physically ill? The answer is strongly suggested by the 684-page, highly readable *The Ashbourne Saga* by Mike A’Dair, featuring



Barrell as the central character. In this persuasive attempt to dramatize the early stages of Oxfordian movement, it appears that this sincere man of Victorian sensibilities rose to the heights of personal triumph only to fall just as steeply. Barrell apparently suffered not only from the inevitable slings and arrows that come with publicly challenging the orthodox Shakespeare establishment, but also from a crisis of the spirit.

The Ashbourne Saga is a series of fourteen teleplays or “episodes” that begins in London in 1847 with the discovery of the so-called Ashbourne portrait of William Shakespeare. The action then jumps to 1928 in New York, where Barrell, a journalist, art critic and photography consultant producing documentary films for Western Electric, contemplates the painting for the first time at the townhouse of Eustace Conway, its new owner. A lover of Shakespeare, he has not yet heard of Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford; nonetheless he sees immediately that the original subject of the portrait has been covered up or otherwise obscured by alterations. He also declares it could not have been the Stratford player, but, rather, a nobleman who “appears to have been a rare breed of poet, philosopher and warrior.” Two years later, in 1930, he attends a lecture on “Shakespeare: Who Was He?” by Percy Allen, who is introduced by Eva Turner Clark, two pioneering followers of J. Thomas Looney’s foundational Oxfordian work “*Shakespeare Identified*,” published in 1920.

What we have, then, is not only a documentary drama (or “docudrama”) of Barrell and his obsession with the Ashbourne portrait (acquired in 1931 by the new Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., and soon unveiled as a genuine painting of the Bard); here, too, is a dramatic account of the fledgling Oxfordian movement in the U.S., including its growing division over the meaning of the Sonnets, during the next two decades. Barrell will make several ocean crossings in search of evidence in England; because of his and others’ efforts, the movement will yield a rich harvest of material; but by the end of the 1940s, it will appear that all such progress has failed to puncture the Stratfordian myth.

A’Dair’s rendering of this history appears to me to be authentic, both in characterizations and dialogue. From it I gather that Barrell, having given up the work enabling him and his wife, Marie, to pay the rent, had limited time before going broke. (His mother, Mary, lived with them.) “All I am interested in now is de Vere,” he tells Marie, “so I intend, with your consent, and hopefully with your blessing, to return to the life I led before: journalism . . . We have ten thousand dollars in the bank. If we live frugally, we’re good for ten years . . . I’d say that, within ten years, and hopefully sooner, I will have found something to cinch the case for Oxford. In doing that, I dare say, I should be able to earn enough to take us safely and comfortably down to—”

“Well, Charles,” his skeptical mother warns him, “you must do what you must do. But for myself I’d rather you were researching anybody—Keats or Shelley or even Milton—anybody other than Shakespeare. To me Shakespeare is a sacred name, the greatest man who ever lived. For you to imagine you could chip away at that, knock Shakespeare down from his throne, well, they are going to laugh at you, Charles, and they are going to try to destroy you. I just hate to see you waste your life on that.”

Having secured the blessing of both women, Barrell begins his quest for the proverbial smoking gun; and therein may well be the rub. It was apparently inconceivable for him to believe that, if Oxford was indeed the true author, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find physical evidence to prove it. He seems to have thought that he might have to make many trips to the great libraries and record offices of London and elsewhere, but that such proof was surely there, just waiting to be found. He would work as hard as anyone ever worked and keep writing up his discoveries until that elusive final piece of evidence fell into his hands—the piece triggering the magical “aha” moment when all the world would see the truth and joyously accept it.

It was a fine dream, but it came with its own demand for fulfillment as well as its own economic time frame. Ten years! It also came with a powerful potential for “confirmation bias” or “seeing what one wants to see”—or, more simply put, self-delusion.

Instead of first pursuing the Ashbourne portrait, however, he had found another promising path to follow: “I want to start with Anne Vavasour,” Barrell tells his wife, indicating that he’s already linking her potentially with the Dark Lady of the Sonnets. It’s a good instinct, because Oxford’s “echo” poem was credited to her as author or co-author; furthermore, Oxfordians in the 1930s knew next to nothing about her. But then in 1934, at the Hatfield House library room, he discovers the letter written by Secretary Francis Walsingham in March 1581, describing the fact that “Anne Vavasour was brought to bed of a son in the maiden’s chamber,” continuing: “The Earl of Oxford is avowed to be the father, who hath withdrawn himself with the intent—as it is thought—to pass the seas. The ports are laid for him . . . The gentlewoman the selfsame night she was delivered was conveyed out of the house and the next day was committed to the Tower. . . .”

From that point, the beating heart of Barrell’s life as an Oxfordian researcher and writer developed along two basic tracks: on one hand, he was quite sure that the Ashbourne portrait contained proof of the earl’s authorship; on the other, he became equally certain that Oxford’s lover Anne Vavasour was the Dark Lady of the Sonnets and that their bastard son Edward Vere was addressed in the Fair Youth series as well as Southampton.

Barrell’s triumph came with his celebrated article

about the Ashbourne portrait in the January 1940 issue of *Scientific American*. He reported comparative analyses of the sitter's face in the Ashbourne with recognized portraits of Oxford, showing its close likeness to them. More importantly, he announced that his investigations with x-ray and infrared photography revealed Oxford as the original sitter, but that the painting had been altered in the nineteenth century to more closely resemble the traditional conception of the author. He found that the hair over the forehead had been scraped out and covered by new paint to create a bald patch suggesting the bulbous dome of the iconic Droushout engraving in the 1623 Shakespeare Folio; he also found that a boar's head on the sitter's signet ring had been overpainted.

Barrell's most exciting revelation was that an inscription in the upper left section indicating the sitter to be age forty-seven in 1611 (matching the age of the Stratford man) must have been added in the nineteenth century, because it was painted over a "full shield of arms, surrounded by decorative mantling and a scroll that evidently once bore a family motto." (In his eagerness and haste, Barrell erroneously suggested that this coat of arms was that of the family of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham.) Barrell also reported discovering the original painter's monogram "CK"—apparently that of Dutch artist Cornelis Ketel, who had worked in London from 1573 to 1581. Ketel had painted Queen Elizabeth in 1578; and in a 1604 biography of Ketel, his contemporary, Karel (Carl) van Mander, wrote that he had created one of "the Duke of Oxford" that has been assumed to be lost.

The *Scientific American* article caused a sensation, but the euphoria was not to last. World War II dominated the first half of the 1940s; then, toward the end of the second half, trouble arrived. In 1948 the attorney Charlton Ogburn (himself an Oxfordian) encouraged Barrell to file suit against Dr. Giles Dawson, Curator of the Folger Shakespeare Library, accusing him of making libelous comments impugning his x-ray work on the Ashbourne and damaging his professional reputation. The core of the charge was that, in a private letter as well as in remarks to Folger visitors, Dawson had stated or implied that Barrell had doctored and/or faked his results. What the two Oxfordians did not know was that to counter Barrell's evidence, the Folger apparently caused further alterations to be made to the portrait prior to the depositions taken in September 1949. Among these changes would have been a further erasure or overpainting of the "CK" monogram that had appeared in the original x-ray work.

Mike A'Dair begins the twelfth teleplay with a note to the reader: "The dialogue in this episode is taken nearly verbatim from the deposition of Mr. Charles Barrell in the case of Barrell versus Dawson, case number 2698-48 for the District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia." A similar note begins Episode Thirteen, which continues with the deposition of Giles Dawson. In these chapters, we find

ourselves literally "in the room" with these real persons, experiencing one of the most important (yet never fully reported) events in Oxfordian history.

With Ogburn on hand at a neutral law office, we first get to witness the scene of Dawson's attorney, Kelley Griffith, as he sizes up his opponent and moves, slowly but surely and with confidence, into his attack. "Now, Mr. Barrell, I'm going to be asking you a series of questions, touching on your suit against my client, Mr. Dawson. You must answer them and you must answer them truly and fully, as best you can. Do you understand?"

"Yes," Barrell replies, but this is not his arena and he is unprepared for what is about to happen to him. Griffith plays him the way a man fishing on the river bank casts his lightweight fly onto a still pool of water and moves it ever so gently, to avoid frightening his prey. He begins by asking Barrell to explain how his reputation has been damaged—a question not easy to answer—and then, without warning, challenges Barrell's written but unsupported statements about the coat of arms on the portrait as that of Elizabeth Trentham or her family.

Griffith: Let me try to get some clarity here. Do you claim that it is the coat of arms of the second wife of the Earl of Oxford, or that it is not?

Barrell: I claim in my opinion, that it *indicates* the coat of arms, yes, I do.

"Griffith stares at Barrell," A'Dair inserts, adding that his eyes are "swimming with curiosity and wonder" as his "lawyer's instincts smell blood." As Barrell continues to flounder, unable to give a positive answer, A'Dair tells us Ogburn has been watching with increasing concern that is now "verging on alarm."

When Griffith asks about the claim of a boar's head (part of Oxford's insignia) on the sitter's signet ring, Barrell explains he had first seen it in 1928, at the home of the portrait's then owner, Eustace Conway. "The picture at that time was in quite a different condition than it was when I examined it at the Folger," he says, explaining that "the shadows of the original design could be seen." Now in 1949, however, there seems to be no way to confirm the presence of a boar's head on the signet ring.

After much further questioning, with Barrell unable to prove he had been libeled or that his reputation had been damaged, he "throws his face in his hands," A'Dair writes, adding, "His fingers massage his scalp through his gray hair. He is the picture of a man who has been destroyed His face looks ravaged He looks old and dazed...."

Barrell and Ogburn meet privately before the next deposition. "It's amazing," Ogburn says, "but, being an Oxfordian, when I read your article in the magazine, I knew you were right. But now, as your attorney, I see that an argument can be made that you are wrong [about the coat of arms]." Barrell complains that he can't walk

back into the history to speak with the participants and be certain about some of his findings. “But you see, dear friend,” Ogburn replies, “that would seem to indicate you don’t believe your own assertions. Hence—”

“All of this has been for nothing,” Barrell jumps in. Yet a minute later he is arguing the case again for his lawyer, spelling out various aspects of the “context” of his findings, such as: “The fact that George Vertue said that the Countess of Strafford had a full-length portrait of Oxford, which had been done by Ketel . . . that Ketel signed his works with a CK . . . and that the Ashbourne is signed with a CK,” he says, adding, “All that went in. That’s the *context* I cultivated. . . .”

Such “context” was one of Barrell’s great strengths as a researcher and writer. He grabbed arrays of facts, some seemingly unrelated, and wove them into a picture to reveal a larger, deeper, otherwise invisible truth about de Vere and his life. The legal battlefield, however, is quite different from the environment in which he has been working as an Oxfordian, and now we are sliding toward despair.

On a separate track, Barrell has done all he can with Anne Vavasour as the so-called Dark Lady and their illegitimate son Edward Vere, who, in Barrell’s view, shares the honors with Southampton as the one of two young men addressed in the Sonnets. In a sweeping, six-part series of strongly written articles titled “Shakespeare’s Own Secret Drama,” published in the *Shakespeare Fellowship Newsletter* [American] from December 1941 to October 1942, he made his case—for example, citing lines of Sonnet 36:

I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame

“It would be difficult to find clearer expression of a heartbroken father’s renunciation of the open pride of parenthood in a charming and worthy son out of wedlock!” he wrote, using the exclamation point not merely for emphasis, but also, it seems, as a way of exclaiming to the world that he has uncovered a Truth that cannot—should not—be challenged. He further argued for “the poet’s mistress being obviously the boy’s mother,” reporting with obvious pride:

The fact that the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford had a bastard son who bore ‘name of single one’ with him has never been known to historians and genealogists of the Shakespearean period. This is my own discovery and represents much grim sleuthing among the records. Its implications are vital to a full understanding of the highly complex character of the poet peer, and, also, to a comprehension of . . . the forty or more sonnets that are addressed to this bastard son. . . .

All through the 1940s he continued to pour forth for the American newsletter, which, in 1944, became the

Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly. It was a dazzling onslaught of original discoveries and insights, focusing on a variety of topics into which Barrell seemed to pump fresh blood and life. Then, however, it all came to an abrupt halt in the fall of 1948, when, according to this series of well-crafted teleplays, Charlton Ogburn Sr. persuaded him to sue Giles Dawson of the Folger for libel.

Explaining that “the coffers of the Fellowship have been sinking fast,” Ogburn makes his pitch: “We could nail them to the wall on this, fifty thousand, a hundred thousand in punitive damages You would get press on this. De Vere would get press. Every newspaper in the country would, once again, be begging you for information on de Vere. Who was this obscure court poet with the golden book richly tied up with a silk ribbon? Why have we never heard of him? Why do we think he was the real William Shakespeare, of all people? This could be bigger than the Scopes trial. This could put de Vere over the top once and for all.”

“Counselor,” Barrell replies, “let’s nail the sons of bitches to the wall.”

Now, in 1948, he has obviously grabbed hold of a mental vision of well-deserved fame and fortune for the work he has accomplished over the past two decades. He is on the verge of repeating, even topping, the recognition received for the *Scientific American* piece back in 1940. But two years later Ogburn is persuading him to drop the case. They have gone to England together and, meeting with the Richmond Herald at Arms, have been told point-blank that the coat of arms in the portrait is not that of the Trentham family.

To complicate matters further, during their trip Ogburn is forcefully arguing that the Sonnets portray Southampton as the son of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth, that is, as a prince who deserves by blood to inherit the throne. Such will be the underlying theme of *This Star of England*, credited to both Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, in 1952. In effect, the disagreement between Barrell and Ogburn over this issue is a forecast of the deep division among Oxfordians that will continue to this day.

“So, if we go through with it,” Barrell says about the lawsuit, “I lose. My career is over and I’m never published again. And if we drop the case, my name is mud. I’m a charlatan and a quack who won’t even defend his professional reputation in court. Result: I’m never published again. Either way, it’s *Hamlet*, Act Five, Scene Two: The rest is silence.”

And silence it will be, during the nearly quarter-century until Barrell’s death in 1974.

Mike A’Dair introduces *The Ashbourne Saga* by writing that his “guiding interest” is first to prove, so far as possible, Oxford’s authorship of the Shakespeare works, “and, secondly, to try to show what it would have been like to have been inside the movement to overthrow the Stratfordian paradigm, to portray the human dimension of the people who made all these astounding

and recondite discoveries.” Additional Oxfordians who appear in this massive work include Percy Allen, B.M. Ward, Eva Turner Clark, Louis Benezet, H.H. Holland and Gwynneth Bowen, among other pioneers on the trail that Looney had blazed. The arguments against the Stratfordian paradigm “did not drop down from heaven or bubble up from hell,” A’Dair continues. “They were won, slowly, by long, hard hours of tedious literary and historical investigation. I have found that effort heroic,” he writes, “and I wanted to portray it in a dramatic work of cinematic art.”

He has certainly done so, with this series of episodes that concludes in 1950 and, therefore, represents only Part One of the entire saga. For more than a quarter-century afterward, the Folger was silent about the Ashbourne portrait; then, in 1979, the Library announced that the coat of arms in the painting was that of Sir Hugh Hammersley, who had been Lord Mayor of London during 1627-28; ironically, the Shakespeare Oxford Society was fooled into declaring its agreement—only to later reverse itself.

A’Dair accuses the Folger of deliberate deception. During the so-called restoration of the painting in 1979, he writes, it was altered for the third time. Now the portrait was “physically deconstructed and carefully reconstructed in a manner that blended the physical characteristics of the original sitter, Edward de Vere, with those of Hammersley.” Sure enough, in 1993 an article in the Folger’s *Shakespeare Quarterly* declared Hammersley to be the sitter.

The Ashbourne Saga concludes in 1950 with Charles Barrell walking away from it all in defeat, but the history must also include work in this century of Oxfordians who have uncovered the magnitude of the deception and, one would think, the profound implications of what took place. First and foremost is the series of articles during 2002 by Barbara Burris for the Oxfordian newsletter *Shakespeare Matters*, in which she details the efforts of two directors of the Folger Library to destroy the evidence that Oxford was the original sitter. Further information was supplied in the Summer 2007 issue of the *De Vere Society Newsletter* by British researchers Jeremy Crick and Dorna Bewley, who show that the Folger made no less than “three attempts to impose a new identity upon the man in the painting”—a campaign dedicated to promoting the sitter as “anyone but Oxford.”

Here, surely, are the makings of a popular mystery novel!

Postscript I: In an exchange of emails, I asked Mike A’Dair what he knows about Charles Barrell’s life at his home in Warwick, NY, after 1950 until his death in 1974. “I know nothing about Barrell’s subsequent life,” he wrote back. “I believe that he was never published after 1950. [Except for his 1972 contribution to Ruth Loyd Miller’s new edition of “*Shakespeare Identified*.”] I don’t believe he became a member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.... I believe he continued to do research,

obsessively, without much hope of publication. He accumulated huge piles of material in his basement. After he died, his nephew or some family member took it all to the dump. His wife did not stop him.”

Postscript II: In his introduction A’Dair writes about Oxford biographer Mark Anderson using a computer to combine the image of the sitter’s face in the Ashbourne portrait with that of de Vere as it appears in the Welbeck portrait painted in 1575: “The right half of the face from the Ashbourne blended perfectly with the left half of de Vere’s face from the Welbeck,” he notes, adding that when Anderson used the composite image for the cover of *Shakespeare by Another Name* in 2005, “To me, and to many people, this was irrefutable proof that Barrell had been right all along.”

Postscript III: In the Winter 2003 edition of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* Oxfordian researcher and author Katherine Chiljan presented evidence that Oxford may well have sat for the Ashbourne Portrait in 1597, when he was forty-seven. This is an intriguing idea, given that many observers believe the sitter looks quite a bit older than thirty, which was Oxford’s age in 1580, when Ketel is known to have been in London. Did the Dutch artist return in the following decade? Or was the portrait done by a different artist? This long-running, true-life mystery tale continues to pose its questions.



ACROSTIC solution (pp.26-27)

SONL ACROSTIC SOLUTION

A. Jessica B. Ohello C. Scotland D. Evoked E. Portugal F. Hammes Castle G. Stockfish H. Old Iou’s I. Blond J. Red hops K. Agamemnon L. No holding M. Apothecary N. Lurks O. Italy P. Audiences Q. Smithfield R. Stafford, all S. Hussars T. Assyrian U. Keech V. Endymion W. Sycorax X. Plutarch Y. Edmund Mortimer Z. All Clear’s AA. Roughshod BB. Edward V Joseph Sobran, *Alias Shakespeare*: “Shakespeare uses hundreds of legal, musical, medical and horticultural terms as well as hundreds of names from classical history and mythology. Did he pick them up casually from books and tavern talk, as most orthodox scholars contend, or did he enjoy a privileged schooling?”

SOF 2017 Conference in Chicago

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship's 2017 Conference is being held in downtown Chicago from October 12 to 15. Conference sessions will take place at the Corboy Law Center at Loyola University, 25 E. Pearson Street.

Registration: It's not too late to register. To register by mail, you can use the form inserted with this Newsletter. Or you can register online: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2017-sof-conference/> If you register by August 31, 2017, you get an "Early Bird" discount!

Accommodations: We still have a few rooms remaining for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights (October 12-14) at The Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile at the special group rate of \$179 per night (the usual rate is \$400). Call 877-303-0104 to book your room. They will ask you which city you are booking for and the name of the group. You can also book directly online at: <https://aws.passkey.com/e/49043966>. Reservations can be changed or canceled up to a week before.

Unfortunately, although we reserved thirty Marriott rooms for Wednesday night, October 11, at the group rate (far more than we usually reserve for the night before a conference), they have all been taken, and we may not be able to get any more at that rate. For anyone wanting a room for Wednesday, or who prefers to stay elsewhere, we are recommending a number of other hotels nearby whose rates are comparable to the Marriott on sites like Booking.com, Hotels.com, and Trivago.com. A few hotels very close to Loyola University—where the conference is being held—are

the [Whitehall](#) and the [Red Roof Inn](#) (the latter, a very budget location on Ontario Street). Other hotels located near the Marriott Magnificent Mile, or in the six blocks between it and Loyola University, include, on the pricier side, the [Intercontinental](#) (right across the street from the Marriott), the [Omni](#), [Westin](#), [Peninsula](#) (posh) and [Millennium](#). Less expensive are the [Hampton Inn](#), the [Dewitt](#), the [Felix](#), the [Dana](#), and the [Warwick](#).

Events: The Conference Schedule is reproduced below. In addition to the regular slate of papers and talks, there are two special events. On Friday evening, October 13 at 7:30, at Navy Pier, is the Chicago Shakespeare Theater's production of *Taming of the Shrew*, set in 1919 during the women's suffrage era. Directed by Barbara Gaines, it features an all-female cast. We have obtained a block of seats at the discounted price of \$58 each. Tickets must be ordered by September 30. Again, they can be purchased online at the SOF Conference Registration page or by using the insert with this issue.

The second special event is on Saturday, October 14, from 5 to 7 PM, when Robin Phillips will present her one-woman show, *O Mistress Mine*. Robin Phillips is an actress, an Oxfordian, and a member of SOF. She has performed her new play most recently in Washington, D.C., where it garnered a great deal of positive attention. She will be available after the showing to answer questions about the script and her work on it. No additional reservation is required for conference attendees to see this premiere showing of the video/live presentation.

Schedule of Events

THURSDAY: October 12

10:00 – 12:00 – Conference Registration Opens (Main Floor Lobby of the Corboy Law Center, Loyola University).

12:00 – 1:00 – Lunch (on own) – Registration moves to Kasbeer Hall (15th floor of the Corboy Law Center). Sales Tables Open.

1:00 – 1:15 – Welcome, Introductions and Orientation.

1:15 – 1:45 – Sabrina Feldman: William Shakespeare, the Shakespeare Apocrypha and the Shakespearean Bad Quartos.

1:45 – 2:30 – James A. Warren: Public Awareness of the Oxford Claim: What the record shows.

2:30 – 3:00 – Bill Boyle: Shakespearean Online Authorship Resources (SOAR).

3:00 – 3:15 – Coffee/Tea Break.

3:15 – 4:00 – Andrew Crider: Edward de Vere and the Psychology of Creativity.

4:00 – 4:45 – Sky Gilbert: Shakespeare/Foucault – The Case of the Disappearing Author.

4:45 – 5:15 – Julie Bianchi: Crafting the Elevator Speech – Intro for Friday Lunch Workshop.

5:15 – 5:30 – Break

5:30 – 7:00 – Hosted Wine and Cheese reception.

Schedule of Events (continued)**FRIDAY: October 13**

8:30 – 9:15 – Heward Wilkinson: The Detective Inspector Hamlet.

9:15 – 9:45 – John Hamill: Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grants Report.

9:45 – 10:30 – Michael Delahoyde and Coleen Moriarty: Report on Italian Research.

10:30 – 10:45 – Coffee/Tea Break

10:45 – 11:30 – John Hamill: Antonio Perez, Penelope Rich, and Avisá.

11:30 – 12:15 – Michelle Stelting: A Sail-maker in Bergamo: Special Knowledge in “Taming of the Shrew.”

12:15 – 1:30 – Lunch (on own).

Optional workshop (with Pizza) hosted by Julie Bianchi for those members who might be interested in facilitating PR events on behalf of the SOF in their own locales.

1:30 – 2:00 – W. Ron Hess: How to Approach a Growing Number of Shakespeare Dictionaries.

2:00 – 2:30 – Ren Draya: Review of Wilson’s 2005 “Shakespeare in Music, a Dictionary.”

2:30 – 3:00 – Jan Scheffer and W. Ron Hess: A Précis for a Proposed Book, “Shakespeare’s Sonnets, Platonism, and Desportes.”

3:00 – 3:15 – Coffee/Tea Break.

3:15 – 4:00 – John Shahan: John Rollett’s Dedication Cryptogram – How we know it is valid.

4:00 – 5:00 – Alexander Waugh: Hidden Truths – In Written and Pictorial Notes.

7:30 – 11:00 – “Taming of the Shrew” at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier.

SATURDAY: October 14

8:00 – 9:30 – Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Annual Membership Meeting.

9:30 – 9:45 – Coffee/Tea Break.

9:45 – 10:15 – Donald Miller: State Power and Shakespeare.

10:15 – 11:00 – Bryan Wildenthal: Early Authorship Doubts – Debunking the Central Stratfordian Claim.

11:00 – 11:45 – Bonner Cutting: Edward de Vere’s Tin Letters.

11:45 – 1:15 – Buffet Lunch with Speaker – Richard Waugaman: An Oxfreudian in Academia: Reflections on Entering the Mainstream.

1:15 – 2:00 – Wally Hurst: Academic Freedom, English Professors, and the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

2:00 – 2:45 – Cheryl Eagan-Donovan: Looney, Ganymede and the Lively Lark.

2:45 – 3:00 – Coffee/Tea break.

3:00 – 3:45 – Tom Regnier: 60th Anniversary of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship.

3:45 – 4:30 – Earl Showerman: The Value of Teaching the Shakespeare Authorship in Lifelong Learning.

4:30 – 5:00 – Break

5:00 – 7:00 – Robin Phillips: Video/Live Show, “O Mistress Mine: The Secrets, Lies, Loves & Wives of Edward de Vere, the REAL Shake-speare!!”

SUNDAY: October 15

9:00 – 9:45 – Priscilla Costello: Shakespeare and Spiritual Philosophy (II).

9:45 – 10:30 – Elisabeth Waugaman: French Cultural Influence on Shakespeare.

10:30 – 10:45 – Coffee/Tea Break.

10:45 – 11:45 – Roger Stritmatter: Leveraging the Shakespeare Allusion Book.

11:45 – 12:00 – Break.

12:00 – 2:00 – Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Banquet and Awards – Open Mic.



SHAKESPEARE OXFORD FELLOWSHIP

P.O. BOX 66083, AUBURNDALE, MA 02466

2017 Conference Registration (Chicago, Illinois)

Full conference registration, October 12-15 (includes all conference presentations and two provided meals):

Qty.

SOF members:

(A member may buy up to two registrations at member price.):

If postmarked on or before August 31, 2017: \$200 x _____ = _____

If postmarked after August 31, 2017: \$225 x _____ = _____

Non-members:

If postmarked on or before August 31, 2017: \$225 x _____ = _____

If postmarked after August 31, 2017: \$250 x _____ = _____

For those attending only specific conference days:

Single conference days (specify day(s): _____) \$65 x _____ = _____

Sunday banquet luncheon only: \$40 x _____ = _____

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's *Taming of the Shrew* – tickets \$58 x _____ = _____

(Friday, October 13 at 7:30 pm) (*limited supply*)

Total: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____ Phone number (optional) _____

Method of Payment: Check ___ (enclose) Credit Card ___ (give details below)

Name on Credit Card _____

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration (Mo./Year) _____

Cardholder's Signature _____

To make reservations at the Chicago Marriott Downtown, call 877-303-0104 and mention SOF Conference, or go to: <https://aws.passkey.com/e/49043966>

**Mail this form with your check or credit card information to:
Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466**

Billy Budd (continued from page 1)

chronologically arranged messages to Southampton during the time he was imprisoned and under sentence of death for his participation in the Essex Rebellion, which took place 8 February 1601.

Lytton Strachey has written a convincing account of the Essex rebellion.³ He tells it as a power struggle between handsome, dashing Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, and the queen's chief advisor Robert Cecil, son of the late Lord Burghley. A leader must be chosen to command English forces putting down the rebellion in Ireland. Wise heads discourage Essex from volunteering for the post, pointing out how difficult it is for foreign troops to suppress insurgents in their native land, but Cecil manipulates council discussions in such a way that Essex finally blurts out that he is the right man for the job. He goes to Ireland at the head of 17,500 troops, naming his best friend, the Earl of Southampton, as his Captain of Horse. The campaign in Ireland is a disaster; fearing that Cecil is turning the queen against him, Essex rushes back to England to give the queen an explanation of his military difficulties and assure her of his love. He is accompanied by Southampton and a group of loyal soldiers. The queen is displeased by his precipitate return, in defiance of her express command. Tensions grow between them, until finally a note from Cecil requiring Essex's presence at a council meeting leads Essex to believe he will be arrested. He takes to the streets with a band of his followers (including Southampton), intending to take control of the Court and remove Cecil from access to the queen. The uprising is ill-planned, and soon defeated. Essex and four of his followers are tried, convicted of treason, and executed. Strangely, the sentence of his chief follower, Southampton (also convicted of treason and sentenced to death), is commuted to life imprisonment. No official explanation for this commutation has ever been given.

The story of *Billy Budd* runs strongly parallel to that of the Essex Rebellion. In both cases a handsome protagonist, more or less naïve, is manipulated by a wily plotter into a position which leads him to an emotional act of violence, a deed for which the power structure decrees that he must be executed. The question we will now consider is this: was Herman Melville aware of this parallelism, was it something that he consciously used in constructing his last literary work, or is it simply a coincidence? If Melville was consciously using material from the Elizabethan period, we would expect to find indications of it in the details of the work. Let us look more closely at some of the characters in *Billy Budd*.

The Captain of the *Indomitable*. In a stunning display of candor, Melville gave his captain the name 'Edward Vere,' the name of the author of the Sonnets, the Shakespeare plays, and (some believe) the biological father of Southampton. It's as if C. S. Lewis gave his self-sacrificing lion in the *Narnia* series the name 'Jesus Christ.' It's as if you came across a 'Where's Waldo' drawing where Waldo is standing on a pedestal in the

foreground holding a banner saying 'Here I Am!' (In Melville's defense, the name 'Edward de Vere' was not as well known in 1891 as it is today.)

Perhaps we're being too hasty, jumping to a conclusion. Perhaps Melville simply chose the name at random. What are the characteristics of the captain?

In the navy he was popularly known by the appellation "Starry Vere." (659)⁴

For many of us, the term "starry" recalls the mullet on the shield in the Vere family crest (Fig. 1). This seems to support our original hypothesis, that Melville was deliberately referring to Edward de Vere.

"But wait," cries the orthodox scholar, "Melville tells us where he got the name. It's from the poem 'Appleton House,' written around 1652 by Andrew Marvell. It even provides the appellation 'starry!'"

This 'tis to have been from the first
In a domestic heaven nursed,
Under the discipline severe
Of FAIRFAX and the starry VERE⁵

The phrase "discipline severe" in the quoted portion of the poem leads one to assume that it deals with naval exploits. It is actually a panegyric to the beauties of the woods surrounding the Yorkshire country home of Thomas Fairfax (1612-1671), and to the charms of his daughter Mary, whom Marvell tutored.⁶ The *Dictionary of National Biography* gives Fairfax a fairly detailed treatment, including his matriculation at St. John's College, Cambridge, and his service in the Low Countries under Edward de Vere's cousin, Sir Horace Vere.⁷ He got along so well with Sir Horace that he married his daughter Anne (she is the "Vere" mentioned in the poem).

Melville gives his captain's full name as "Edward Fairfax Vere." The *DNB* lists an Edward Fairfax (d. 1635) as a translator and poet whose works were especially valued by James I and Charles I.⁸ There is some mystery about his origins: his name is missing from some genealogies. In one he is listed as a son of Sir Thomas Fairfax (1560-1640, grandfather to the Thomas Fairfax mentioned above), with a dotted line connecting him to a brother, Sir Charles. One historian describes him as a natural son of Sir Thomas.

Aside from family connections, the name Fairfax itself can be construed as significant. In Elizabethan times, "Vere" was pronounced to rhyme with "Fair." Some Oxfordians assert that de Vere used "fair" as a code word for "Vere." "Fax" can be viewed as a Latin noun. The dictionary⁹ gives three definitions: (1) a torch; (2) a firebrand, instigator; (3) light, flame, shooting star. I leave it to the reader to decide whether any of these terms can be applied to Edward de Vere.

Melville says explicitly that his Vere is "allied to the higher nobility" (657), and gives his philosophy in some detail (660-661):

He had a marked leaning toward everything intellectual. He loved books, never going to sea without a newly replenished library, compact but of the best. . . . His settled convictions were as a dyke against those invading waters of novel opinion, social, political, and otherwise, which carried away as in a torrent no few minds in those days. . . .

While other members of that aristocracy to which by birth he belonged were incensed at the innovators mainly because their theories were inimical to the privileged classes, Captain Vere disinterestedly opposed them because they seemed to him not alone incapable of embodiment in lasting institutions, but at war with the peace of the world and the true welfare of mankind.

One need only read Ulysses's "degree" speech in *Troilus and Cressida* (I.iii) or Menenius's "tale of the belly" in *Coriolanus* (I.i) to see how closely the above convictions agree with those held by the author of the Shakespeare canon.¹⁰ Toward the end of the novel Melville recounts Captain Vere's death in a battle with the French, and makes this final observation (736):

The spirit that spite its philosophic austerity may yet have indulged in the most secret of all passions, ambition, never attained to the fullness of fame.

This was certainly true of Edward de Vere at the time Melville was writing. Perhaps the situation is changing.

Shakespearean Allusions. For the alert reader, *Billy Budd* is filled with names and phrases reminiscent of Shakespearean or Elizabethan characters, inserted almost subliminally. This starts early in the story: the lieutenant who abducts Billy from his merchant ship (640) is named Ratcliffe, reminding us of Thomas Ratcliffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex, under whom de Vere served in putting down the Northern Rebellion of 1569-70. Sussex, a father figure to de Vere, died in 1583, probably poisoned by his political enemy, the Earl of Leicester. Ogburn has suggested he was the model for the murdered king in *Hamlet*.¹¹ Another reminder of the murdered king: "[Claggart's unobserved] glance would follow the young sea-Hyperion [Billy] with a settled . . . expression" (688). Hamlet twice refers to his father as the sun god Hyperion: first in a soliloquy (I.ii) and then in his confrontation with Gertrude (III.iv). Admiral Nelson is mentioned several times and is usually referred to as "Sir Horatio," again reminding us of *Hamlet*. A sailor who befriends Billy is described as "an old Dansker, long anglicized in the service. . . ." What is Hamlet if not an anglicized Dane? In fact, the term could be applied to the entire Vere family: Ogburn says "the de Veres must in origin have been Vikings—Danes to the Anglo-Saxon English. . . ." ¹² The old Dansker is described as "an *Agamemnon* man" (668), reminding us of the Greek general in *Troilus and Cressida*. Elsewhere we are told "Sir Horatio, being with the fleet off the Spanish coast, was directed by the Admiral in command to shift his

pennant from the *Captain* to the *Theseus* . . ." (657) (the Duke of Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is named Theseus). The world of *Billy Budd* is one in which half the warships are named after characters in Shakespeare! And it goes on. Another passage (670) refers to a conversation between the Dansker and Billy: "[T]he old sea-Chiron, thinking that perhaps for the nonce he had sufficiently instructed his Achilles. . . ." The overt reference is to Chiron, the wise centaur of Greek legend, but Chiron is also one of Tamora's mischievous sons in *Titus Andronicus*. And, of course, Achilles is another character in *Troilus and Cressida*. At one point we are told "something exceptional in the moral quality of Captain Vere made him . . . a veritable touchstone . . ." (698); with this statement we have not only a reference to the "allowed fool" in *As You Like It*, but one which links the Oxford figure in that play directly with Captain Vere (with a "veritable" thrown in for free). On three separate occasions, Melville refers to Billy's "welkin eye" (i.e., one that is sky-blue) (640, 670, 678). The phrase is from *The Winter's Tale* (I.ii.136). The jealous king Leontes applies it to his young son, who subsequently dies from grief at the supposed death of his mother. A poignant moment in *Billy Budd* involves Captain Vere's reaction when he discovers that Billy's blow has killed Claggart (702).

Slowly he uncovered his face; and the effect was as if the moon emerging from the eclipse should reappear with quite another aspect than that which had gone into hiding.

The reader familiar with the Sonnets will immediately think of Sonnet 107, which alludes to the death of Elizabeth: "The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured . . ."

Billy Budd as Henry Wriothesley. The quote from *Billy Budd* given immediately above (702) continues directly:

The **father** in him, manifested toward Billy thus far in the scene, was replaced by the military disciplinarian. (emphasis added)

Melville mentions Captain Vere's fatherly relationship to Billy on two other occasions. Just after Claggart has accused Billy to his face, Captain Vere perceives his difficulty in speaking and says, "There is no hurry, my boy. Take your time, take your time" (701). The author describes these words as "fatherly in tone." Later, Melville says of the captain, "He was old enough to have been Billy's father" (720). Lewis Carroll enunciated the rule "What I tell you three times is true."¹³ Melville has told us three times that Captain Vere represents Billy's father.

When we turn to *The Monument*, we find that Billy's name is as explicit as Captain Vere's. Whittemore's study of the Sonnets has led him to propose that, because of their political implications, they are written in a special language involving coded references to the protagonists in the drama of Southampton's arrest, imprisonment,

death sentence, and finally, commutation of that sentence. Whittemore asserts that in this context, the word “bud” always refers to Southampton as “the budding flower of the Tudor Rose Dynasty” (61).² Below are examples of the use of “bud” in the Sonnets (the number of the sonnet is followed by the page number in parentheses on which Whittemore discusses the symbolism).

Within thine own bud buriest thy content
[Sonnet 1 (61)]

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May
[Sonnet 18 (134)]

And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud
[Sonnet 35 (246)]

When summer’s breath their masked buds discloses
[Sonnet 54 (336)]

And buds of marjoram had stol’n thy hair
[Sonnet 99 (533)]

If Whittemore’s view of the Sonnets is correct, the name “Budd” in *Billy Budd* points to Southampton as unambiguously as the name “Vere” points to Oxford.

It could be argued that Whittemore’s association of the word “bud” with Southampton, though consistent and tightly argued, is mere speculation. However, there is a contemporary source that makes that association directly and unambiguously. Sometime after 1590, Thomas Nashe dedicated a work¹⁴ to Southampton and addressed him in the following words:

Pardon, sweete flower of matchless Poetrie
And fairest bud that red rose ever bore . . .

Some Oxfordians believe that Thomas Nashe was one of Oxford’s pen names.

Early in the novel, as Lieutenant Ratcliffe is impressing Billy, he converses amicably with Captain Graveling,¹⁵ commander of the merchant ship on which Billy has been serving. Reluctant to lose Billy, he laments, “Lieutenant, you are going to take my best man from me, the jewel of ’em” (642). On first reading, I thought that “jewel” was a strange term for a mariner to use describing one of his crew. However, *The Monument* explains that “jewel” has a special significance. In Sonnet 27, the first commemorating Southampton’s imprisonment, he is described as “a jewel (hung in ghastly night)” (208). Whittemore’s commentary mentions a similar use of “jewel” in Sonnet 96. He also quotes two examples from the plays in which “jewel” is equated with “son”: “As for my sons, say I account of them as jewels” (*Titus Andronicus*, III.i); “Had our prince, Jewel of children, seen this hour (*The Winter’s Tale*, V.i). A related word is “ornament,” also used to refer directly to Southampton (Sonnets 1, 21). Throughout the novel, Billy is referred to as “the Handsome Sailor,” the nautical equivalent of “the Fair Youth.”

After Claggart’s death, Captain Vere convened a drumhead court, over which he presided until the verdict

was reached. After the verdict, the captain had a private conversation with Billy in which he told him of the sentence. Melville notes that “the condemned one suffered less than he who mainly had effected the condemnation . . .” (720). As the ranking peer in England, Edward de Vere participated in the proceedings that resulted in a death sentence for Southampton (Whittemore, 202-268). Sonnets 40-44 express Oxford’s anguish at seeing his son tried and convicted (277-300).

Billy Budd as the Works of “Shakespeare.” The identification of Billy Budd as Henry Wriothesley, as discussed, cannot be the whole story, since Billy was executed and Wriothesley was not. Why was he not? In Whittemore’s interpretation, de Vere struck a bargain with Robert Cecil whereby Wriothesley’s life would be spared if he relinquished all claim to the throne. This condition required that literary traces of his royal parentage be obscured, leading to the further requirement that de Vere’s name be permanently disassociated from his works. This sundering of the works from their author—their father—is the metaphoric execution that takes place on the deck of the *Indomitable*, and is the reason that Vere/de Vere “never attained to the fullness of fame” (736). There are hints of Billy’s status as a creation early in the story. As Billy is being mustered into the service, an officer asks him his place of birth (648).

“Don’t you know where you were born?—who was your father?”

“God knows, Sir.”

Yes, Billy was a foundling, a presumable bye-blow, and, evidently, no ignoble one. Noble descent was as evident in him as in a blood horse.

The Old Dansker calls him “Baby Budd,” the name by which he is eventually known throughout the ship, and one that suggests something that has been created (669). At the moment of execution, Billy cries out, “God bless Captain Vere!” a cry that is echoed by the assembled crew (729). Oxford has been blessed by his literary works—they are the reason thousands of people are interested in him today, and this interest from a knowledgeable public echoes the response of the crew.

We have discussed the significance of Billy’s last name. His first name is a nickname for William. A possible reason for the choice of this name in connection with the works of “Shakespeare” is left as an exercise for the reader.

The Old Dansker. This character is Billy’s confidant, the one he turns to when puzzled by events aboard the ship. Melville writes that his relationship to Billy is “patriarchal,” as indeed the nickname (Baby Budd) he bestows on the Handsome Sailor would imply. I suggest that the Dansker is a second father figure, bearing that relationship to Billy in his persona representing the Shakespeare canon. The Dansker is known to the crew as “Board-her-in-the-smoke,” due to a scar and blue-

peppered complexion from wounds he received in a sea battle (668). I lay awake several nights trying to puzzle out the meaning of “Board-her-in-the-smoke” in a Shakespearean context. It finally occurred to me that a “board” is a pasteboard rectangle used for the cover of a book. As a verb in this context, “board” means “to bind (a book) in boards,”¹⁶ thus (by extension) “to publish.” “Smoke” can be read as “that which obscures or deceives,” as in the phrase “smoke and mirrors.” Thus the Dansker’s nickname is equivalent to “publish deceptively,” which is a thumbnail description of what happened with the First Folio (with its allusions to “Stratford” and “Swan of Avon”), and strengthens the hypothesized connection between Billy and the Shakespeare canon.

Billy Budd as Essex. While I believe that the strongest associations are with Southampton and the Works, there are three circumstances that point directly to Essex, and I would be remiss if I did not mention them. (1) During the treason trial, Essex maintained that his reasons for the uprising were patriotic, to prevent England being sold to Spain, and that he had heard the queen’s secretary, Robert Cecil, state that the Spanish Infanta’s claim to the succession was as good as anybody’s. Cecil had been hiding behind the arras (like father, like son), and he suddenly revealed himself, making an impassioned speech to the assembly in which he roundly condemned Essex. This face-to-face confrontation parallels that between Claggart and Billy in the novel. (2) Essex was executed. Billy Budd is executed, Southampton is not. (3) The moment before the axe fell, Essex “asked God to bestow His blessing upon Elizabeth” (Whittemore, 295), thus prefiguring Billy’s “God bless Captain Vere!”

Claggart as Robert Cecil. Functionally, Claggart represents Robert Cecil, the wily plotter who set up Essex and Southampton and then brought the full force of the law down on them. To what extent has Melville alluded to Cecil’s personal characteristics? He introduces Claggart as follows (662):

Claggart was a man of about five-and-thirty, somewhat spare and tall, yet of no ill figure on the whole. His hand was too small and shapely to have been accustomed to hard toil. . . . His brow was of the sort phrenologically associated with more than average intellect; silken jet curls partly clustering over it, making a foil to the pallor below, a pallor tinged with a faint shade of amber. . . . This complexion, singularly contrasting with the red or deeply bronzed visages of the sailors, and in part the result of his official seclusion from the sunlight, though it was not exactly displeasing, nevertheless seemed to hint of something defective or abnormal in the constitution and blood.

Cecil’s most prominent physical characteristic was his humpback. Melville has chosen not to refer to it (“no ill figure”), perhaps reluctant to make his villain too

operatic. However he hints obliquely to “something defective or abnormal. . . .” Ogburn, on observing a portrait of Robert Cecil at Hatfield House, noted its pallor.¹⁷ Cecil was born on 1 June 1563, and thus was 37 at the time of the Essex Rebellion, close enough to “about five-and-thirty.”

Discussing Claggart’s career, Melville continues (666):

The superior capacity he immediately evinced, his constitutional sobriety, ingratiating deference to his superiors, together with *a peculiar ferreting genius* manifested on a singular occasion, all this capped by a certain austere patriotism, abruptly advanced him to the position of master-at-arms. (emphasis added)

This sounds like Cecil to me. It apparently would to Lytton Strachey as well, since he wrote of “the gentle genius of Cecil.” A biographer of the Cecil family says of Robert Cecil that he was “noted for a sort of grave, gentle sweetness.” He goes on to say, “His complex nature, glinting forth through his mask of apparent gentleness, baffled people and made them feel uneasy; all the more because events showed it to be combined with such a formidable capacity quietly to eliminate his opponents.”¹⁸ In his biography of Oxford, Mark Anderson, referring to the period around 1593, writes:

Robert Cecil had begun to augment his father’s extensive espionage networks with his own cabal of agents and assassins.¹⁹

Melville comments on the consequences of Claggart’s position as master-at-arms (666):

His place put various converging wires of underground influence under the Chief’s control, capable when astutely worked through his understrappers of operating to the mysterious discomfort, if nothing worse, of any of the sea-commonality.

Melville emphasizes Claggart’s unpopularity with the crew by pretending to minimize it (665):

But the less credence was to be given the gun-deck talk touching Claggart, seeing that no man holding his office in a man-of-war can ever hope to be popular with the crew. Besides, in derogatory comments upon anyone against whom they have a grudge, or for any reason or no reason dislike, sailors are much like landmen; they are apt to exaggerate or romance it.

Cecil was markedly unpopular. Ogburn says that “execrations of Robert Cecil, who was blamed for [Essex’s] fall, were scrawled on walls, even those of Whitehall.”²⁰ Anderson discusses Cecil’s unpopularity in Shakespearean terms:

In 1597, the play *Richard III* had first appeared in print. The analogy between Shake-speare’s humpbacked usurper and the power-hungry Robert Cecil was hardly obscure and not hard to apprehend.

Common libelers, for instance, were fond of comparisons between Cecil and Richard III. (“Richard [III] or Robin [Cecil], which was worse?/ A crook’t back great in state is England’s curse. . . .”) ¹⁹

And finally, we have another nickname puzzle. Claggart’s first name is John (662), but the Old Dansker consistently refers to him as “Jemmy Legs” (670-671); “Jemmy” is a nickname for James, not for John.²¹ Our identification of Claggart with Robert Cecil provides a clue. Cecil almost singlehandedly engineered the deal that transported James VI from Scotland to the British throne; in that sense he was the “legs” of James I.

Our old friend, the orthodox scholar, objects to the above analysis. “Nonsense!” he snorts, “That is the most pestiferous pile of speculative garbage I have ever read. The author can’t make up his mind whether Edward de Vere is the Captain or the Old Dansker. He can’t make up his mind whether Billy Budd represents Southampton, Essex, or an inanimate pile of books.” Exactly. Melville is not in the business of simply retelling a historical tale with the names changed. I believe that he has taken a number of threads from historical occurrences and woven them into his own story of moral ambiguity and the human condition.²²

In the physical sciences, a theory is esteemed to the extent that its reach exceeds its grasp—that is, to the extent that it sheds light on phenomena other than those it was intended to explain. The prime example is the quantum theory, which was devised by Max Planck around 1900 to account for the distribution of wavelengths in light emitted by a perfect absorber (a “black body”). In 1905 Albert Einstein used the theory to explain aspects of the photoelectric effect. Then Niels Bohr adapted it to explain the structure of the hydrogen atom. Eventually it was developed to the extent that it explained all of microscopic electrodynamics, and potentially all of chemistry. The theory that Hank Whittemore propounds in *The Monument* was crafted to explain Shakespeare’s Sonnets. I believe it illuminates at least one level of Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd* as well. [Note: This paper was originally presented at the Third Dutch Shakespeare Authorship Conference in Utrecht, The Netherlands, on 2 June 2006.]

ENDNOTES:

- Andrew Delbanco, *Melville* (Knopf, 2005), 290. Chapter 12 (288-322) has a valuable treatment of *Billy Budd*.
- Hank Whittemore, *The Monument* (Meadow Geese Press, Marshfield Hills, Massachusetts, 2005).
- Lytton Strachey, *Elizabeth and Essex* (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1928), 189-275.
- Page numbers refer to *Billy Budd* in *The Portable Melville*, ed. Jan Leyda (Viking, 1952), 637-739.
- Poetical Works of Andrew Marvell*, ed. J. R. Lowell (Little, Brown; Boston, 1857), 7-33.
- Encyclopedia Britannica* 7, 895.
- Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 1917) VI, 1005-1013.
- DNB* VI, 995-996.
- Cassell’s Latin Dictionary* (Macmillan, 1968).
- See also Charlton Ogburn, Jr., *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (EPM Publications, 1984), 241, 249-250.
- Ogburn, 666-667, 696-697.
- Ogburn, 417.
- Lewis Carroll, *The Hunting of the Snark* (Kaufmann, 1981), 21.
- Thomas Nashe, *Choice of Valentines* (quoted in “A Royal Shame” by Paul Altrocchi, *Shakespeare Matters* 4.4 [Summer 2005], 1,12-17).
- Captain Graveling’s name may be the first hint in the novel that there is an Elizabethan subtext: the decisive battle in the defeat of the Spanish Armada is the *Battle of Gravelines*, 8 August 1588. Gravelines is a French coastal village near Calais. See David Howarth, *The Voyage of the Armada* (Viking, 1981) 175-192.
- Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd Edition (Clarendon, 1989) II, 339.
- Ogburn, 199.
- David Cecil, *The Cecils of Hatfield House* (Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 91, 118. The author is a direct descendant of Robert Cecil.
- Mark Anderson, *Shakespeare by Another Name* (Penguin, 2005), 273, 305.
- Ogburn, 753-754.
- The *OED* (VII, 212) defines *Jemmy* as “A pet-form and familiar equivalent of the name JAMES.”
- I thank the late Elliott Stone for alerting me to the presence of Captain Edward Vere in *Billy Budd*.

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