



The Mystery of *Emaricdulfe*

by Gary L. Livacari, D.D.S.

I am grateful to the late Joseph Sobran for introducing me to the Shakespeare authorship controversy in the mid-1980s. At the time Sobran was a political columnist for *National Review* magazine. On frequent occasions he would digress from his normal political commentary to write passionately about an Elizabethan nobleman named Edward de Vere, whom he believed was the author of the Shakespeare canon, writing under the pseudonym “William Shakespeare.” He rejected the conventional wisdom that assigned authorship to the man from Stratford, often dismissing him derogatorily as “Shaksper.”

In 1994 Sobran left *National Review* and started his own newsletter, *Sobran's*. He continued his digressions into the Shakespeare controversy, now with more frequency and conviction, and often used his newsletter as a vehicle to showcase his original research. *Sobran's* had a small circulation, so many of his contributions went unnoticed by Oxfordians. In the January 1998 issue he announced what he considered a major discovery: “I’ve uncovered a previously neglected work by the man who was Shakespeare. Moreover, it tends strongly to confirm

that he was actually, as I tirelessly contend, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.”

While browsing through an Elizabethan-era poetry anthology, Sobran stumbled upon an anonymous collection of forty sonnets. These largely forgotten poems, composed in the highly stylized Petrarchan tradition, were first published in 1595 with the odd title, *Emaricdulfe*. Having recently

written extensively about Shakespeare’s sonnets in his 1997 book *Alias Shakespeare*, Sobran immediately noticed “an abundance of Shakespearean touches and verbal parallels, including similarities in style, themes, and details,” adding:

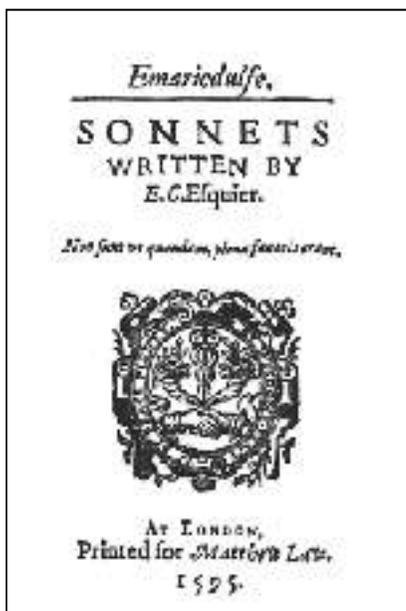
About an hour with the 40 sonnets was enough to convince me that Shakespeare—that is, Oxford—had indeed written them. I was amazed, ecstatic. The more I studied the poems, the more Shakespearean parallels I found. Eventually I identified more than 200—five per sonnet, or one every three lines! Even the dedication has echoes of the dedications of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Whoever wrote the Shakespeare canon wrote these sonnets. And it could hardly be the man from Stratford. Of Oxford we know that he had a towering literary reputation in his own day. Edmund Spenser was one of many who praised him lavishly, and also that he thought it vulgar for a gentleman to publish his work under his own name.

The forty sonnets comprising *Emaricdulfe* can be viewed at this link:

<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/Emaricdulfe.html>.

Two copies of the original text exist, one at the Huntington Library and the other, in very fragile condition, at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Interestingly, the Folger copy is found bound with three other known works of Shakespeare: *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, and *Venus and Adonis*, implying common authorship. The theme of *Emaricdulfe* is that of a nobleman’s love for a beautiful lady of the court and his lamentations over his failure to win her love. The lady is identified only by the coded name *Emaricdulfe* and is otherwise unknown to history. The title page identifies the author-speaker only as “E.C., Esquier,” an apparent pseudonym. After extensive study Sobran concluded that “E.C.” and “Shakespeare,” i.e., Edward de Vere, were the same poet. He offered the further speculation that *Emaricdulfe* was the work of a young Edward de Vere, written many years before it appeared in print, and that it may have been among the poems Francis Meres had in

(Continued on page 9)



From the President:

An Oxfordian Consensus

Who would dare assert that we know all there is to be known?

– Galileo Galilei, Letter to Father Benedetto Castelli, 21 December 1613

There have been some recent discussions among Oxfordians about the future of the movement. Some are concerned that the Oxfordian theory will never overcome the well-entrenched Stratfordian theory until Oxfordians agree on a clear and coherent theory that explains a number of “loose ends” about Oxford’s authorship: for example, was Shakspeare Oxford’s “front man” during Shakspeare’s life, or was he merely a posthumous front man after publication of the First Folio? Did Oxford write all the plays by himself, or did others write at least a part or all of some plays? Why did Oxford use the pen name “Shake-speare”? Might Oxford have written under other pen names? Why did Oxford’s authorship have to be kept secret after his death? Why did Oxford dedicate two narrative poems to the Earl of Southampton? Was Southampton the “fair youth” of the sonnets? Who was the

“dark lady”? Who was the “rival poet”? Oxfordians are not unanimous on any of these questions.

It has been suggested that Oxfordians can never prevail over Stratfordians until we come to a consensus on such questions. It has also been suggested that some of the more radical Oxfordian theories (such as the “Prince Tudor” [PT] theory, which posits that Southampton was the illicit child of an affair between Oxford and Queen Elizabeth) subject the Oxfordian cause to ridicule and that PT advocates should be banished, repudiated, or otherwise shunned.

Let me register here my opinions that (1) Oxfordians do not need to arrive at a consensus in order to dethrone the Stratfordian theory, (2) radical Oxfordian theories are not the primary threat to our movement, and (3) it hurts our cause to suppress and blame others in the movement, rather than concentrate on spreading the Oxfordian message to the world.

Do we need a consensus in order to prevail?

To those who say we need a coherent theory with no “loose ends” in order to defeat the Stratfordians, let me offer a counterexample: the Stratfordian theory itself. This theory’s utter lack of coherency, consistency, and evidentiary support has not kept it from ruling the stage for centuries. Do Stratfordians agree on who was the fair

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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*.

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

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youth? the dark lady? the rival poet? How do they explain the apparent love triangle described in the sonnets? Do they agree on the dates of the plays? Do they agree about whether their candidate was a secret Catholic? Do they come even close to having a satisfactory explanation of how the Stratford man, with, at most, a grammar school education, learned so much about law, philosophy, classical literature, ancient and modern history, mathematics, astronomy, art, music, medicine, horticulture, heraldry, the military, Italy, and aristocratic sports that his easy knowledge of these subjects is evident in the works?

We do not need to agree on all the particulars of Oxford's authorship to win over the public mind. "Consensus" is a will-o'-the-wisp, a mirage. I am always suspicious when I hear that a particular question is "settled" or that there is a "consensus" on it. To say such things is to underestimate the infinite layers of knowledge that the universe offers for our examination. Now that I have quoted Galileo in the epigraph to this article, let me quote Sir Karl Popper (1902-1994), one of the greatest philosophers of science of the 20th century:

The game of science is, in principle, without end. He who decides one day that scientific statements do not call for any further test, and that they can be regarded as finally verified, retires from the game.

There will always be more questions and there will never be absolutely complete and settled answers, but we can always get closer to certainty, even if we can never reach it. While Stratfordians endlessly research minor issues, they miss the big picture. "Consensus," at least about the author's identity, is what they want. They want the issue to be "settled." They wish that dissenters would just go away and stop bothering them. They have retired from the game. That is why they will lose in the end. The greatest literary revelation of all time is right under their noses and they won't even look at it.

Are radical theories in our movement the real threat?

Stratfordians want easy targets. This is why they devoted three chapters in the Wells-Edmondson 2013 book *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* to Delia Bacon. It is very easy to portray her as a woman who wrote an "unreadable" book on the authorship question and then went mad. The implication is clear: stay away from the authorship question or you too will go mad. Stratfordians laugh at Looney's name. They call us snobs. They argue that Oxford died before many of the plays were written. Besides, they say, Shakespeare must have been ignorant because he didn't know that Bohemia didn't have a seacoast and that you couldn't go from Verona to Milan by boat. Yet the Stratfordians barely mentioned PT theory in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, which seems strange if it is such an Achilles' heel for us.

Stratfordians will use any perceived or pretended weakness in non-Stratfordian theories against us, and they won't bother to present our theories fairly. *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* didn't face up to the arguments made in the major works by authorship doubters: Diana Price wasn't mentioned; Looney was quoted out of context though his thesis was never refuted; Mark Anderson's meticulous biography of Oxford was dismissed with a sneering comment. No matter how clear and cogent our arguments are, the Stratfordians will distort them and disparage them. But that tactic cannot prevail in the long run because intelligent people will soon notice that the constant, shallow ridicule is no substitute for rational discussion and presentation of evidence.

What should we do?

The authorship question is a political struggle. It concerns the power that some people have over others—the kind of "politics" that occurs in families, schools, churches, businesses, and academia. It's about getting one's way through force or authority or intimidation rather than through the strength of good ideas or noble actions. Stratfordians rule the Shakespeare narrative, especially in universities. They decide who gets the jobs, who gets published, who gets tenure. What would happen to their jobs if the Oxfordian thesis were to prevail? The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust thrives on the Stratford myth. They also thrive by playing "divide and conquer" among non-Stratfordians. It isn't that we shouldn't debate our theories among ourselves, but we should not be blaming each other for not making greater headway against the myth. Many years ago, I was involved in a campaign that successfully amended the constitution in my state. One of our key strategies was to work together with other groups that agreed with us on that issue even if they didn't agree with us on anything else. That is how political action gets done. Oxfordians agree that Oxford was Shakespeare. Yes, we differ on the details, but we will make more progress in this political fight if we work together. When you are in a political fight, you can't afford to drive away allies.

That is why the SOF is an inclusive group, one in which all aspects of the Oxfordian theory can and should be freely and openly discussed. As I have argued in my presentation, "The Law of Evidence and the Shakespeare Authorship Question" (available on the SOF YouTube Channel), the circumstantial evidence for Oxford as Shakespeare is compelling. In a court of law, most cases can be proven entirely with circumstantial evidence. No other candidate, in my opinion, has a stronger case than Oxford, based on the evidence that we have at this time. The majority of rational, open-minded people who are presented with the evidence usually see this with little difficulty. (Witness the "How I Became an Oxfordian" series on the SOF website—one rational, intelligent person after another describing how

they followed the evidence that led them to Oxford.) For the past few years, I have been giving introductory talks on authorship to people who were fairly new to the subject. The audience reaction is very gratifying. People are fascinated. We don't need to be pointing fingers at each other over the dismal state of the Oxfordian movement because it isn't dismal—we are winning, slowly but surely, as you will find if you talk to the general population. We just need more of us to get out

there and spread the word. Every Oxfordian is a lighted candle in the Stratfordian darkness. We need to stop turning our attention inward on each other and turn it outward, to the wide world of people who are eager and ready to hear our message. Let's get out there. The world is waiting for us.

– Tom Regnier, President

Letter to the Editor

SOF members might like to know that the popular online feature, “How I Became an Oxfordian,” developed and edited by Bob Meyers, is actually the second iteration of that idea. A short-lived precursor was introduced more than three decades ago.

On page 3 of the Spring 1983 issue of the *Newsletter*, then editor Warren Hope ran an announcement:

We would like for “How I Became an Oxfordian” to become an irregular feature of the Newsletter. SOS members are encouraged to write up their stories and send them to [me]. Such articles will have an inherent interest for other Oxfordians and may also guide the Society's planning of future publicity efforts.

On page 2 of that issue was an article by Rhoda Messner entitled “How I Became an Oxfordian,” which was the first in the series. The second one, by Harold Feldman, appeared on page 1 of the next issue (Summer 1983).

As far as I can tell, no further “How I Became an Oxfordian” articles appeared. Warren Hope did an excellent job as editor, but had to retire in 1984 after four years at the helm to devote full time to his doctoral dissertation in English, which led to his Ph.D. at Temple University. Gordon and Helen Cyr then did a fine job as

editors *pro tem* for two years until the inimitable, indomitable Morse Johnson took over in 1986. In his first issue (Fall 1986) Johnson paid the following tribute to the Cyr's:

Right Honourables Helen and Gordon Cyr:

I know not how I shall offend in dedicating this edition of the Shakespeare/Oxford Newsletter to your Lord and Ladyships. Nor how anti-Stratfordians will censure you for choosing so weak a prop to perpetuate your faithful and masterly contributions. Only if your Honours are ultimately pleased will I account myself successful and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have approximated the high standards your long-time labours have established. And if the first issue of my editorship proves inept, I am resolved to make its successors worthy of their parents.

I leave it to your honourable survey, which I wish may always answer your own wishes and the hopeful expectations of all Oxfordians.

Your Honours in verity,
Morse Johnson

He sounds a bit like Strat-Man, doesn't he?

Paul Altrocchi
Honolulu, HI

What's the News?

Three Oxfordian Books Receive Favorable Mainstream Notice

Three recent titles by Oxfordians have received favorable notices in *Kirkus Reviews*, a well respected online and print review service that is read and used by many librarians and booksellers.

Reviewing Gary Goldstein's *Reflections on the True Shakespeare*, the *Kirkus* reviewer found that it was “An unstuffy, stylistically refreshing Shakespeare study.” The reviewer praised Goldstein's approach as “admirable in that it's quietly and intelligently assertive. He doesn't attempt to bludgeon readers with his arguments; rather, he accumulates evidence and then modestly allows

readers to decide for themselves.” The reviewer summarized Goldstein's experience as an Oxfordian researcher and editor, and also noted that he “provides detailed literary exegesis regarding the Shakespeare plays' allegorical language and the presence and significance of the Essex dialect in them (de Vere was born in Essex).” Goldstein was recently informed that, in addition to appearing online, the review would also appear in the February 1, 2017, print issue of *Kirkus Reviews*; it was one of 35 reviews selected by the editors for inclusion in the “Indie” section of the magazine, which goes to more than 5,200 industry professionals.

Hank Whittemore's *100 Reasons Shake-Speare Was the Earl of Oxford* was praised as “an engrossing and thoughtful literary examination.” The reviewer wrote that “Whittemore strongly champions the Oxfordian

argument in this tour de force defense while remaining a highly entertaining writer. A breezy but very intelligent tone is maintained throughout the book; the reader is neither patronized nor boggled by minutiae and jargon. Instead, there is a magnetic sense of history, art, politics, and human nature injected into a smooth and eminently readable storytelling style. It is obvious that the author's research has been painstaking, but the resulting document is more than painless—it's downright pleasurable."

James Warren's novel, *Summer Storm*, also received positive comment. It's set in modern times in a university environment, where the central character, English professor Alan Fernwood, comes to doubt his belief in the traditional Shakespeare. The reviewer wrote that "Even readers familiar with the [authorship] controversy will learn something in this intellectually fast-paced telling." The reviewer found that the novel's classroom discussions were "genuinely absorbing as general-interest probes into the plays," and called the book "An assured and surprisingly gripping tale about the perils of ideological conformity."

Established in 1933, *Kirkus Reviews* is issued twice monthly. It currently reviews about 10,000 titles annually in its online format; about 1,000 titles are reviewed in the print edition. Some of its reviews are self-generated, but most (including these three) are commissioned. The author pays a fee to Kirkus, which then assigns an independent reviewer ("a content and genre expert [who] has experience with similar styles," according to its website). The review—usually about 300 words—is transmitted to the author, who can then elect to have it published or kept private.

[Gary Goldstein's *Reflections on the True Shakespeare* was reviewed in the Fall 2016 issue of the *Newsletter*. Hank

Whittemore's *100 Reasons Shake-Speare Was the Earl of Oxford* and James Warren's *Summer Storm* are reviewed in this issue.]

It's Now Sir Mark Rylance

Actor and prominent authorship doubter Mark Rylance has been awarded a knighthood. In the 2017 New Year Honours List, announced by the British government



on December 30, 2016, Rylance was named a Knight Bachelor, in recognition of his “services to theatre.”

Rylance, 57, has been hailed for his many stage and film roles. He has won three Tony awards (for his roles in *Boeing Boeing*, *Jerusalem*, and—as Olivia—in *Twelfth Night*) and an Academy Award (for his role in *Bridge of Spies*). He also served as the first artistic director of the recreated Shakespeare’s Globe theatre in London.

Born in England, Rylance lived in the U.S. for several years and attended secondary school in Milwaukee. It was there, at age sixteen, that he first played Hamlet. Returning to England in 1978, he studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. In 1988 he again played Hamlet, this time with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

From 1995 to 2005, as artistic director of Shakespeare’s Globe theatre, he directed and acted in every season. In 2007 he and fellow actor Derek Jacobi publicized the launch of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition’s Declaration of Reasonable Doubt at Chichester, where they presented a copy of the Declaration to William Leahy of Brunel University. Rylance also wrote and starred in *I Am Shakespeare*, a play about the authorship issue. More recently, he has played Thomas Cromwell in the BBC TV miniseries *Wolf Hall*, for which he won a BAFTA TV Award.

Rylance has continued to remain interested in the authorship issue, though he does not unequivocally espouse a particular alternate candidate. Last year, he and Jacobi appeared in a video and on National Public Radio to discuss the topic (see *Newsletter*, Spring 2016).

A total of twenty-two persons were named Knight Bachelors in December. Other recipients included musician Ray Davies (“for services to the arts”), pop singer Ken Dodd (“for services to entertainment and charity”) and opera singer Bryn Terfel (“for services to music”). Rylance becomes at least the third British actor with authorship doubts to be knighted, joining Sir John Gielgud and Sir Derek Jacobi. Rylance and Jacobi are also honorary lifetime trustees of the SOF.

***Brief Chronicles* Volume 7 Now Available**

As announced earlier, Volume 7 of the SOF annual journal *Brief Chronicles* is now available. It can be accessed (free of charge) on the SOF website; printed copies may be ordered through Amazon.com for \$9.99 plus shipping. The contents include:

- “Farewell . . . and Hello Again” by Roger Stritmatter.
- “Who Wrote the First Biography of Shakespeare? It was not Nicholas Rowe in 1709!” by Kevin Gilvary.

- “Greed and Generosity in the Shakespearean Question” by Richard M. Waugaman.
- “An Arrogant Joseph Hall and an Angry Edward de Vere in *Virgidemiarum* [1599]” by Carolyn Morris.
- “Teaching the Sonnets and de Vere’s Biography at School – Opportunities and Risks” by Elke Brackmann and Robert Detobel.
- “Oxford and The Arte of English Poesie” by Richard Malim.
- “Edward de Vere: Translator of Johan Sturm’s *A Ritch Storehouse or Tresurie for Nobilitie and Gentlemen?*” by Richard M. Waugaman.
- “Engaging Academia: Some Thoughts” by James Warren.
- Exchange of Letters between James Warren and John Shahan.

Also, as announced, this will be the final volume of *Brief Chronicles*, at least for a while. Dr. Roger Stritmatter, who edited the journal since its inception in 2009, informed the Board of Trustees in late 2016 that he had decided to step down in order to devote more time to his numerous other scholarly pursuits. He wrote: “Setting aside an endeavor involving the large emotional and intellectual investment that has been put into *Brief Chronicles* is not easy. Despite the occasional trials, I believe the series has established a permanent and significant place in the history of authorship studies.” In response, the SOF Board of Trustees “decided, with Roger’s agreement but still with considerable reluctance, to suspend publication of the journal. We feel that *Brief Chronicles* was so intimately connected to Roger’s vision that it would not be the same journal without him. Furthermore, the SOF still has a thriving journal in *The Oxfordian*, edited by Chris Pannell, and we decided that our best course would be to focus our resources on a single journal.” The Board expressed its appreciation to Stritmatter, managing editor Dr. Michael Delahoyde, and Delahoyde’s predecessor, Gary Goldstein, for their outstanding work in producing seven regular volumes and one special volume of the journal.

First, No Shakespeare; Now, No English

It’s probably not news that most college English majors don’t have to take a Shakespeare course. In a 2015 report, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni found that, of fifty-two schools surveyed, only four required their English majors to take a Shakespeare class. But, in a page one article on January 13, 2017, the *Boston Globe* reported that one school has gone a step further: dropping the English major entirely. Colby-Sawyer College, a small liberal arts institution in New Hampshire, announced it is no longer offering majors in English or philosophy. The reasons are largely budgetary. The school will lay off eighteen persons and

reduce the hours of other staff. Colby-Sawyer's president, Sue Stuebner, said, "If we try to do it all we're not going to do it all well." The college plans to focus on its most successful programs—nursing, business, and sports management—and has hired a consulting firm to recruit students. Founded in 1837, Colby-Sawyer has about 1,100 students, including eighteen current English majors. Its plight is typical of many small liberal arts schools, which were badly hit during the 2008 recession and now struggle to find enough students who can pay the high tuition (\$54,000 at Colby-Sawyer). As the *Globe* reported, "Without a large endowment, the admissions office agonizes every year over whether the school will enroll enough students to balance the budget."

In Memoriam: Wenonah Finch Sharpe (1926-2017)

Oxfordian Wenonah (Nonie) Sharpe died January 1, 2017, at 90 years of age. The Authorship Question and English history were her abiding passions. She enjoyed using her intuition, life experience, and literary background to read "between the lines" of historical and literary evidence, coming up with a sensible story, and, initially, disagreeing with those who said (rightly) that she could not support some of her claims with documentary evidence. For example, she believed that, since the youngest child often inherited a family's goods, Edward de Vere's daughter, Susan, had his manuscripts. Email exchanges with John Shahan and Roger Stritmatter convinced her to express reasonable doubt, at least in public. "OK—Susan *might have had* her father's plays and poems."

Stephanie Hughes's writings on the de Vere family and Ian Haste's question, "What facts lead you to believe that Oxford is Shakespeare?" compelled Nonie to pull her ideas together and give a presentation on that "vexed and confusing subject," "Who Was Shakespeare?" to the Free Thinkers of Port Angeles, WA, where she displayed a copy of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt and the First Folio's Droeshout engraving of the ultimate Shakespearean fool. She also joined the Seattle Shakespeare Oxford Society and contributed to the Shakespeare Authorship Research Center at Concordia University.

Trained as a registered nurse, Nonie maintained a keen interest in science and natural history that benefited her husband, Grant Sharpe, a botanist, naturalist, professor and author of flower guides for the National Park Service and textbooks on park and wildland management. She was editor and part author of all his books, but could not get proper credit on the textbooks without academic credentials. She returned to school in 1982 for a B.A. in English Language and Literature from the University of Washington, where she got more than her *bona fides*. Avid reading for decades now paid off. She discovered she was far better informed about the allusions of James Joyce than the instructor, and learned to augment class discussions

without alienating his assumed authority, a skill she further honed once she became an authorship doubter.

Nonie had learned to love Shakespeare in secondary school in her home town, Penticton, BC, Canada, where she read and memorized pithy bits from her favorite play, *Macbeth*. Questioning the authorship began in 1989, watching Al Austin's "The Shakespeare Mystery" on PBS's *Frontline*, then reading Irving Matus's "The Case for Shakespeare" in *The Atlantic*. Learning of Professor Daniel Wright's authorship conference in Portland, she wrote to him, speculating that more than one author wrote Shake-Speare. "No," he said, "come and learn." She took the bait, in turn hooking her daughters, Loretta and Kathryn, on the mystery. The three enjoyed many spirited discussions and fine conferences—her last was the 2010 joint SF/SOS conference in Ashland, Oregon.

Nonie was an avid genealogist, and wrote an award-



winning play about her pioneer grandmother, which was staged by a local theater company. She also wrote poetry throughout her life, and one stanza, from the 1969 poem "What are Children For?" uses a dramatic metaphor:

They are a captive audience, later to become
a highly critical one, before whom you must play
every day. Grudging in applause, they have
no concept of the difficulties the script presents.

Nearly fifty years later, her children better understand the challenge of playing a parental role and are pleased to have inherited her strong will, artistic talents, love of literature, and critical thinking skills.

Contributed by Kathryn Sharpe

Eagan-Donovan Steps Down from SOF Board; Bianchi Succeeds Her

Filmmaker Cheryl Eagan-Donovan has stepped down from the SOF Board of Trustees, effective February 1, 2017, in order to devote more time to promotion of her Oxfordian documentary film, *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*. President Tom Regnier commended Cheryl on her valuable service to the SOF, especially her taking on the role of Finance Committee Chair. "While we will miss having Cheryl on the Board, we are sure that she will do even more for the cause by ensuring that her superb film is widely seen," he said.

The Board has selected Julie Sandys Bianchi to serve the remainder of Cheryl's term, which ends in October. Julie may be best known to SOF members for her presentations at the 2014 SOF conference in Madison on the use of DNA for solving Elizabethan ancestral mysteries and in 2016 in Boston on card-playing imagery in the First Folio. The video of her First

Folio talk can be seen on the SOF YouTube Channel. Julie has a Master's Degree in Drama from San Francisco State University and has worked in a variety of theater settings, both on the stage as an actress and behind the scenes as a designer, stage manager and theater educator. Welcome, Julie!



Cheryl Eagan-Donovan

Julie Sandys Bianchi

2017 SOF Conference in Chicago

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is pleased to announce that its 2017 Annual Conference will be held this coming **October 12th to 15th in Chicago**.

We have reserved a block of rooms at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile (540 Michigan Avenue). Room rates at the Marriott have a published rate of over \$400 a night. SOF, however, is offering conference attendees a significantly reduced rate of \$179 a night plus tax (single or double room). Reservations are available now by phone or through the website and can be changed or canceled up to a week before.

If you are interested in arriving a day early or staying an extra night, you can get the same rate for October 11th and 15th as well. Our rate also includes in-room Wi-Fi for \$1 a night (usually \$14.95). And for anyone joining the Marriott Rewards program (it is free to join), even



the \$1 a night charge will be waived. So we recommend that you join Marriott Rewards online before booking.

Marriott's group reservation line is available at 877-303-0104. They will ask you which city you are booking for and the name of the group. You can also book online here: <https://aws.passkey.com/e/49043966>

Note: Because the special rate covers single or double rooms, the online reservation may show only one person booked even if the room is being booked for two people. If you book a room, the rate will be good for two.

The conference itself will take place near the hotel at the beautiful Kasbeer Hall at Loyola University's Corboy Law Center. It is an easy ten-minute walk from the hotel or a modest and shareable cab ride.

Conference registration has been set at \$250, including all conference materials, numerous coffee/tea/danish breaks over the four days, the closing banquet on Sunday, and one additional lunch. If you are an SOF member, you will get an automatic 10 percent discount, bringing the rate down to \$225.

Advance purchase of the conference registration by **August 31** through the SOF website or by mail will allow you another \$25 discount, meaning that your conference registration fee can be as low as \$200. Students with valid ID may attend conference presentations at no charge (meals not included).

Other special options and discounts for our time in Chicago are also being negotiated. We urge you to watch the SOF website for further details, as well as information on when paper proposals will begin to be accepted.

You can register on our website or use the form included with this newsletter.



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

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For those attending only specific conference days:

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(Emaricdulfe, continued from page 1)

mind in 1598 when he wrote that “Shakespeare” had passed his “sugared sonnets among his private friends.”

Sobran highlighted Sonnet Number 24 as exhibiting the most persuasive examples that “E. C.” and “Shakespeare” were one and the same:

1. Oft have I heard honey-tongued ladies speak,
2. Striving their amorous courtiers to enchant.
3. And from their nectar lips such sweet words break
4. As neither art nor heavenly skill did want.
5. But when Emaricdulfe gins to discourse.
6. Her words are more than well-tun'd harmony.
7. And every sentence of a greater force.
8. Than Mermaids' song, or Sirens' sorcery;
9. And if to hear her speak, Laertes' heir
10. The wise Ulysses liv'd us now among,
11. From her sweet words he could not stop his ear.
12. As from the Sirens' and the Mermaids' song;
13. And had she in the Sirens' place but stood,
14. Her heavenly voice had drown'd him in the flood.

Here are the Shakespearean parallels Sobran identified in this sonnet (I quote directly from the article in the January 1998 edition of *Sobran's*):

Line 1: “honey-tongued,” *Love's Labor's Lost*: “honey-tongued Boyet.”

Lines 2, 5, 6: “enchant...discourse...harmony.” *Venus and Adonis*: “Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear.” *Comedy of Errors*: “of such enchanting presence and discourse.” *Love's Labor's Lost*: “doth ravish like enchanting harmony.”

Line 3: “from their nectar lips.” *Venus*: “such nectar from his lips.”

Line 6: “well-tun'd harmony.” *Titus Andronicus*: “the well-tuned horns.” *The Rape of Lucrece*: “well-tuned warble.” Sonnet 8: “well-tuned sounds.”

Lines 8, 12, 14: “Mermaids...Sirens...drown'd.” *Henry VI*: “I'll drown more sailors than the mermaids shall.” *Comedy of Errors*: “O train me not, sweet mermaid, with they note To drown me in they sister's flood of tears. Sing, siren, for thyself.”

Line 9: “and if to hear her speak.” Sonnet 130: “I love to hear her speak.”

Lines 9-10: “Laertes' heir The wise Ulysses.” *Titus Andronicus*: “wise Laertes' son.”

Lines 11-12: “stop his ear...Mermaid's song.” *Comedy of Errors*: “I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.” *Lucrece*: “As if some mermaid did their ears entice.” *Venus*: “Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's song.”

Lines 13-14 [which, in Sobran's opinion, clinches the case]: “And had she in the Sirens' place but stood, Her heavenly voice drown'd him in flood.” *Lucrece*: “That had Narcissus seen her as she stood, Self-love had never drown'd him in the flood.”

Note this rhyme pattern in another sonnet of *Emaricdulfe*:

O Lust, of sacred love the foul corrupter,
Usurper of her heavenly dignity.
Folly's first child, good counsel's interrupter.
Foster'd by sloth, first step to infamy.

Compare this quatrain from *Lucrece*:

Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion batter'd by the enemy;
Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,
Grossly ingrit with daring infamy.

The style and themes are equally Shakespearean; these lines, with their wistful reflection on beauty and mortality, would be at home among the 1609 Sonnets:

O foolish nature, why didst thou create
A thing so fair, if fairness be neglected?
But fairest things be subject unto fate,
And in the end are by the fates rejected.

Consider the following parallel lines and phrases from “E.C.” (EC) and Shakespeare (WS):

EC: “A beauteous issue of a beauteous mother.” WS: “Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling sire”; “When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.”

EC: “Fair-springing branch sprung of a hopeful stock.” WS: “That from his loins no hopeful branch might spring.”

EC: “For nature of the gods is to be merciful.” WS: “Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods? Draw near them then in being merciful.”

EC: “The stars that spangle heaven with glistering beauty.” WS: “What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty?”

EC: “a ship on Neptune's back.” WS: “o'er green Neptune's back With ships made cities.”

EC: “True badge of faith.” WS: “the badge of faith to prove them true.”

EC: “So pure a chest pure treasure may contain.” WS: “Some purer chest to close a purer mind.”

EC: “in her heart enthroned.” WS: “enthroned in the hearts of kings”; “enthroned In your dear heart.”

EC: “eyes that gaze upon thy beauty.” WS: “an eye to gaze on beauty.”

EC: “my heart's deep grief and sorrow.” WS: “grief and sorrow still embrace his heart.”

EC: “love-lacking Vesta.” WS: “love-lacking vestals.”

EC: “modest Diana.” WS: “modest Dian.”

EC: “love-choking lust.” WS: “choked by unrestricted lust.”

EC: “the high-house of fame.” WS: “the house of fame.”

EC: “virtuous monuments.” WS: “virtuous monument.”

EC: “heavenly mould.” WS: “moulds from heaven.”

EC: “bastard of nature.” WS: “nature's bastards.”

EC: “my yielding heart.” WS: “my unyielding heart.”

EC: "in wealthy nature's scorn." WS: "in the scorn of nature."

EC: "heavenly shape." WS: "a shape of heaven."

EC: "plough the seas." WS: "plough at the foam."

EC: "rich jewels." WS: "rich jewel."

EC: "the whistling winds." WS: "the whistling wind."

EC: "changed the hue." WS: "change the hue."

EC: "christen anew." WS: "new-christened."

EC: "love's purity." WS: "purity in love."

EC: "love-kindled." WS: "love-kindling."

EC: "chaste vows." WS: "vowed chaste life."

EC: "Juno for state." WS: "highest queen of state, Great Juno."

EC: "higher strain." WS: "high strains."

EC: "heavenly gifts." WS: "heavenly gift."

EC: "so sweet a saint." WS: "sweet saint."

EC: "there all enraged." WS: "here all enraged."

EC: "high pitch." WS: "higher pitch."

EC: "death's ebon gates." WS: "death's ebon dart."

EC: "richest treasure." WS: "rich treasure."

EC: "true types." WS: "true type."

E.C. and Shakespeare use identical phrases, including these: "the world's report," "sweet repose," "golden slumber," "virtue's nest," "holy fire," "hell-born," "endless date," "deep unrest," "golden tresses," "cruel death," "suffer shipwreck," "pretty action," "ten times happy," "snow-white," "true constancy," "several graces," "well-deserving," "lily hand," "honey sweet," "outward graces," "honey breath," "the golden sun," "weal and woe," "sacred beauty," and "princely beauty."

Sobran concluded his article:

And all this is the short list. Coincidence, copying, influence, plagiarism, and so forth are out of the question. Only one poet commanded this style. The evidence could hardly be more conclusive. Yet no scholar has even noticed these parallels, which have been lying in plain sight for four centuries. It's one of the most astounding oversights in the history of literary scholarship. How could this happen? Simple. Most of the scholars have never taken the Shakespeare authorship question seriously. And by the same token, they've never questioned other Elizabethan authorship attributions. And so this incredible treasure was left to me, courtesy of those countless academic scholars who, rejecting as absurd the possibility that Oxford was "Shakespeare," therefore never paused to wonder whether other words from the same golden quill, under other guises, were waiting to be noticed.

I'd like to add a discovery of my own, one that may have been overlooked by Sobran: A literary device very familiar to Oxfordians and hinting at de Vere authorship is found in Sonnet 28. The first eight lines all begin with the words "If ever":

If ever tongue with heaven inticing cries,
If ever words blowne from a rented hart,

If ever teares shed from a Lovers eyes,
If ever sighes, issue of grieffe and smart,
If ever trembling pen with more then skill,
If ever paper, witnes of true love,
If ever inke, cheefe harbenger of will,
If ever sentence made with art to move

Oxfordians have observed encrypted wordplays based upon variations of the word "ever" numerous times in other works of "Shakespeare." Is this Edward de Vere leaving one of his not-so-subtle identity clues, or is it a mere coincidence?

The Stratfordian establishment greeted Sobran's Shakespeare-*Emaricdulfe* connection with predictable derision. In 2007 *Emaricdulfe* was the subject of a thesis submitted by Stratfordian doctoral candidate Georgia Chapman Caver to the University of Tennessee graduate English Department. Caver noted that the Folger Library copy of *Emaricdulfe* is found bound together with three works of Shakespeare "for unknown reasons," and she failed to consider the rather obvious reason why this might be. She added, "Perhaps *Emaricdulfe*'s association here with Shakespeare's works helped inspire Joseph Sobran's identification of E. C. as 'Shakespeare,'" an assertion she proceeded to dismiss:

One final candidate must be mentioned [for the author of *Emaricdulfe*], though I find the suggestion laughable. Joseph Sobran suggests that *Emaricdulfe* was written much earlier than its 1595 publication date and is the work of William Shakespeare (that is, the Earl of Oxford). Sobran bases his claim on his identification of over 200 words and phrases that exist as parallels in *Emaricdulfe* and Shakespeare's works. Some of his parallels stand up to scrutiny better than others. However, many of the ties he suggests are hardly convincing....

If this dissertation does nothing else, it makes the case that *Emaricdulfe* is filled with words and phrases found in a dizzying array of Early Modern texts. One might just as easily conclude that Shakespeare wrote *Fidessa*, *Phyllis*, *Chloris*, and all the rest. Sobran's suggestion cannot be taken seriously. One may well get the impression, though, that E. C. had experienced and been taken with much of the Shakespeare then available, especially the poems.

Apparently over 200 parallels in a work of forty sonnets—an average about five per sonnet—were not sufficient evidence for Caver to draw any conclusions. For Stratfordians this is a concept too dire to merit any serious consideration. Even more astonishing, Caver, quoting another orthodox Shakespearean scholar, Charles Edmonds, dismisses as unremarkable "E. C.'s experimentation with an extra syllable per line as corresponding with Shakespeare's poetry of the same date," and noted Edmonds's disappointment that "the evidence of E. C.'s having thus experimented suggests that

Shakespeare's usage was not even a semi-originality [sic]." To clarify, the inference is that the poet "Shakespeare" copied this unique writing stylization from the anonymous author "E.C.!"

Conclusion

In January 1998 Joseph Sobran shared with the readers of his newsletter persuasive circumstantial evidence that *Emaricdulfe*, a largely unnoticed composition of forty Elizabethan era sonnets, was the work of a young Edward de Vere, written before he adopted the pseudonym "William Shakespeare." Sobran presented a convincing case, but is the evidence conclusive? Did Joseph Sobran overreach in his conclusion, perhaps due to wishful thinking? I found the evidence convincing, but I leave that judgment to others with more experience than I in establishing authorship congruence.

Now, more than six years after Sobran's death, it is time to give this important original discovery the exposure it deserves so that a final determination can be made. With its more than 200 parallels between *Emaricdulfe* and known works of "Shakespeare," Sobran's argument merits further study. If he is correct, he has uncovered an important early work of Edward de Vere, aka Shakespeare. It is also time to give Sobran the posthumous recognition he deserves for his many contributions to the resolution of the Shakespeare authorship controversy.

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Hamlet's Intent A Comment and Query

by Patrick McCarthy

In his 2011 *Brief Chronicles* article, *The Law in Hamlet*,¹ Thomas Regnier, Esq., elucidated many of the legal issues raised in the play. Among them was the criminal intent of Hamlet relating to the death of Polonius. As Hamlet is importuning his mother, Gertrude, he hears something from behind the arras. Exclaiming "a rat" and thrusting his sword through the tapestry, Hamlet discovers that he has slain Polonius.² Hamlet's exclamation—"a rat"—furnishes the legal excuses of both accident and insanity. It could be argued that he accidentally killed Polonius by mistaking him for a rodent climbing behind the tapestry.

Alternatively, and perhaps more persuasively in view of the fact that the text of the play has Polonius crying, "What ho! Help!" just before he is stabbed, an insanity defense is suggested.³ In this instance of antic impulse, mistaking Polonius for a talking rat might suggest madness before

accident. But if there were method to his madness, it would be in laying the foundation for a later plea even as he thrust through the curtain.⁴

Inherent also in the dialogue is the issue of mistaken identity: "I took thee for thy better."⁵ Here Hamlet admits that he mistook Polonius for Claudius in wielding his sword. In the previous scene, Hamlet had stayed his sword from slaying Claudius while the king was praying. Hamlet did not wish to dispatch his father's killer while Claudius was "in the purging of his soul" and "this same villain send to heaven."⁶

Thus Hamlet, in the aftermath of the play-within-the-play, "The Mousetrap," had resolved to kill Claudius, but delayed the murder when he encountered the king at prayer. Hamlet subsequently applied his murderous intent to the "rat" behind the arras, only to discover that he had killed the eavesdropping Polonius, rather than his intended victim, Claudius.

"Purposed Evil"

In criminal law the concept of *mens rea*⁷ involves an analysis of the intent of the perpetrator in determining the blameworthiness of his conduct. To establish the crime of murder, specific intent is required. Thus, for example, a penalty for a homicide may be mitigated by negligent accident (e.g., vehicular manslaughter), or obviated by self-defense.⁸

The availability of the legal defense of madness naturally arises in the play and has been particularly discussed in the context of Hamlet's slaying of Polonius.⁹ Early in the play Hamlet states that he may "put an antic disposition on," or assume madness as a guise.¹⁰ If he were not truly insane when slaying Polonius, his murderous intent would not be excused by mistaken identity. His *mens rea* would be "transferred" in the eyes of the law to the death of Polonius, providing the specific intent to make Hamlet guilty of homicide with malice aforethought.

The Slayer Not the Slain

As noted by Regnier,¹¹ the modern English law's emphasis not on the status of the victim, but on the mental state of the perpetrator, was still evolving in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Whereas historically the guilt of the accused had been partly a function of the identity or status of the victim (e.g., a burglar or assailant), during Shakespeare's time a more nuanced assessment of the accused's intent was developing in jurisprudence. Hence the defenses of self-defense or insanity focused on the intention of the accused, including whether the accused could even formulate rational intent.¹²

In sixteenth century England, even a finding of self-defense could subject a defendant to suffer "forfeiture of his goods." The death of another by "misadventure," such as "the shooting of an arrow," could also result in the "forfeit [of] all his goods."¹³ "[T]he medieval approach was from the standpoint of the victim not the killer."¹⁴

Insanity Plea

In the play's final scene, when Hamlet seeks forgiveness from Laertes, Hamlet refers to his mental state and alludes to a lack of specific intent to kill Polonius. Hamlet has slain Laertes's father, and expresses regret for it. Before the climactic duel, Hamlet asks pardon. He pleads that he was not guilty by reason of insanity. But even as Hamlet speaks, Laertes has already conspired with Claudius to wreak revenge on Hamlet for the deaths of Ophelia and Polonius.

Hamlet's stated rationale expunges intent: Hamlet was "not himself," since he had been "taken away" from himself. In a remarkable *volte-face*, Hamlet pronounces himself also a victim of an insane act. Referring to himself, the killer, as "poor Hamlet," he declares that madness was the perpetrator.

HAMLET

Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;
But pardon 't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness: if 't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother. (V.ii. 240-258.)

Archery Accident

In proclaiming Polonius's death to be the result of "madness," Hamlet denies the *mens rea*, or "purposed evil" (intentionally malicious conduct) that would make him a murderer. Yet, in further describing the act, he also differentially describes an accidental death: "I have shot mine arrow o'er the house, / And hurt my brother." In contrast to his earlier remark that he had killed Polonius by mistaking him for Claudius ("I mistook you for your better"), Hamlet now analogizes to an unintentional mishap: an archery accident.¹⁵

Ophelia's Death and *Hales v. Petit*

The subject of criminal intent and the mental state surrounding a death were also prominently featured earlier in the play. The scholarly consensus of the graveyard scene (V.i) is that the confounding conversation of the gravedigger is a confused rendition of legal precedent

affecting the disposition of a suicide's estate. As described in the dialogue by the gravedigger, or "clown":

For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly,
it argues an act: and an act hath three branches: it
is, to act, to do, to perform: argal, she drowned
herself wittingly. ... (V.i.9-13.)

Legal scholars noted the reference to a specific case, *Hales v. Petit*, in this misconstrued bit of burlesque.¹⁶ Yet the humorous misconstruction reveals a familiarity with the case, which was generally unavailable for review except to legal practitioners, law students, or those schooled in the obscure language of the courts of that era, Law French (it was decided in 1562 and reported by legal scholar Edmund Plowden in 1571).¹⁷

The burlesqued rationale in the historic case was that Hales's act (of suicide) consisted of three parts: the imagining, the resolution,¹⁸ and the perfection. The evolution of Hamlet's own mindfulness of his father's death during the play could be described as progressing through three phases. In Act 1 Hamlet's grieving first evolves into the imagining of revenge of his father's murder. Hamlet learns from the ghost that Claudius poisoned King Hamlet. Yet Hamlet cannot trust the mere report of a specter. The resolution to act follows from "The Mousetrap," when Hamlet becomes convinced that the ghost's report was right. Having resolved to kill Claudius, Hamlet belays his sword on finding Claudius at prayer. Mistaking Polonius for Claudius in the next scene, Hamlet then acts on his resolution, only to find a "wretched, rash, intruding fool" has been slain in place of Claudius. Finally, the execution of Claudius reaches perfection in the final scene as Hamlet stabs and poisons the usurper.¹⁹

In the report of the *Hales v. Petit* case, the court engages in a rhetorical legal fiction of separating the suicide victim, Sir James Hales, from himself, as it were, in order to dissect his self-inflicted death.²⁰

"Sir James Hales was dead, and how came he to his death? It may be answered by drowning—and who drowned him? Sir James Hales...."

In like fashion, Hamlet rhetorically refers to himself in the third person when seeking Laertes's forgiveness and separates himself from his deed. In doing so, Hamlet pleads insanity.

What I have done, ...
I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not. (V.ii. 244-250.)

Hamlet's Intent

Hamlet's felonious intent to kill Claudius would be "transferred" in his act of slaying Polonius to provide the necessary *mens rea*, or "purposed evil" for a criminal act.²¹ Such a provision for transferred malice can be distinguished from the accidental homicide Hamlet later describes in the archery mishap. During the period of 1550 to 1600, archery accidents were the subject of detailed inquests into legal liability.²²

While Hamlet's self-absolving insanity plea to Laertes may be inconsistent with his earlier admission that he had killed Polonius in a case of mistaken identity, it appears beyond a reasonable doubt that the author of the play comprehended complex concepts of the law of criminal intent, particularly including suicide and homicide, in creating this tragedy.

Query

Setting aside the issue of whether the shooting of an arrow over the house would have been sufficiently reckless to constitute negligent homicide, the extensiveness of the detailed reports of inquests on archery accidents during the second half of the sixteenth century suggests that contemporary legal training encompassed just such a hypothetical. The further existing records from the Elizabethan era that were transcribed on paper are increasingly being digitally scanned and made more widely available. While Hamlet's analogy to the errant arrow and its implications for absolution are under consideration, a question arises. Is there a precise precedent for the hypothetical used by Hamlet in describing the archery incident? If so, does this suggest that Shakespeare had an even more detailed knowledge of legal precedents of that era?

As far as I am aware, Hamlet's reference to an arrow being shot over a house and hurting a brother has yet to be traced to a specific case. The discovery of the corresponding rationale of the *Hales v. Petit* decision to the gravedigger's amusing explication enhanced the scholarship on the play and augmented appreciation for its author's erudition. Perhaps this article may spur the search for the discovery of some parallel precedent in the legal archives for the archery accident. The precedent could be in the form of a reported case, such as a coroner's inquest, or of a transcribed lecture at Gray's Inn on the role of intent in the analysis of liability.

¹ Thomas Regnier, "The Law in Hamlet," *Brief Chronicles* III 107-132 (2011). I am indebted to Mr. Regnier for his assistance and encouragement.

² Folger Shakespeare Library, *Hamlet*, Digital Text, III.iv.27-29. <http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/html/ham.html#line-3.4.0> (hereinafter Folger).

³ Folger, III.iv.27-30; Regnier, 112-113.

⁴ Folger II.ii.223-224. Regnier, 114-115 & n.15. Gertrude reports to Claudius that Hamlet's "mad" stabbing of Polonius was a "lawless fit." Claudius repeats this characterization to

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: "Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain." IV.i.7-12, 34. Accidental death by rat poisoning is cited in legal treatises as an example of excusable homicide by "misadventure." Thomas G. Watkin, *Hamlet and the Law of Homicide*, 100 *Law Quarterly Review* 282 (1984), quoting William Lambard, *Eirenarcha* (London, 1581). Watkin also notes the play's modification from the original tale that places Polonius behind the arras, rather than beneath a quilt. This furnishes the somewhat more plausible argument for an accidental killing of an unseen form behind a curtain. Watkin, 300-301; Regnier, 113. Hence, Hamlet has a two-pronged defense: insanity and accident. But mistaken identity is no defense due to the doctrine of transferred intent.

⁵ Folger, III.iv.39. Hamlet, who is characteristically described as sensitive, appears remorseless in his observations here as Polonius exsanguinates before him, remarking that "to be too busy is some danger." At the end of the scene, Hamlet will "lug the guts" offstage. Folger, III.iv.40, 235.

⁶ *Ibid.* III.iii.82, 90.

⁷ The term is usually translated as "guilty mind." It is commonly attributed to Sir Edward Coke's expression of the mental element needed for criminal liability: "*Actus non facit reum nisi mens sit rea.*" Coke's quotation is from his discussion of the text of the statute on treason in the first chapter of the *Third Institute*. Coke, Sir Edward. *The Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England; Concerning High Treason, and Other Pleas of the Crown and Criminal Causes*, ch. 1, p. 6. The translation may be rendered as: "The act is not guilty unless the mind is also guilty." This maxim contemplates the accused's mental state as a defining element of guilt. It is reminiscent of Hamlet's own observation to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that "Denmark's a prison," because "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." Folger, II.ii.262.

⁸ "Se offendendo" is the malapropism used by the gravedigger (V.i.9), comically referring to a defense with which Edward de Vere would have been familiar. De Vere was acquitted after an inquest into the death on July 23, 1567, of a member of William Cecil's household. According to the coroner's findings, the yeoman, Thomas Brinknell, "desperately ran and fell upon the point of" de Vere's foil, and thereby Brinknell "feloniously pierced and stabbed himself" and "instantly died." In this manner de Vere, whose matriculation in the study of law at Gray's Inn was recorded in the Register of Admissions as "1566-67," gained firsthand acquaintance with the doctrine of self-defense: *se defendendo*. See Mark Anderson, *Shakespeare by Another Name* (hereinafter *SBAN*) (Gotham Books 2005), 33-37; Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn 1521-1887 <https://archive.org/stream/cu31924029785452#page/n41/mode/2up>. My thanks to Mark Anderson for his substantial assistance and insight.

⁹ For example, Lord John Campbell, *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements* (1859); R.S. Guernsey, *Ecclesiastical Law in Hamlet* (1885) *op. cit.* See also Mark Alexander's essay, "Shakespeare's Knowledge of Law," <http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shakespeares-knowledge-of-law/>.

¹⁰ Folger, I.v.192.

¹¹ Regnier, 113; Watkin, 282 (1984).

¹² The modern rules of the insanity defense are often viewed as arising from a London case also involving transferred intent.

Daniel M'Naghten (spelled "M'Naughton" in some American references) was believed to have attempted to assassinate Prime Minister Robert Peel when he approached Peel's private secretary, Edward Drummond, and shot him in the back. *Queen v. M'Naghten*, 10 Clark & F 200 (1843). He was judged not guilty by reason of insanity.

¹³ Lambard, 214-216.

¹⁴ Watkin, 286.

¹⁵ Anderson quotes Hamlet's reference to the arrow accident in relation to the conflagration on August 18, 1572, that followed a mock battle staged for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth. An "incendiary missile" caused a fire engulfing a local residence. Anderson, *SBAN*, 57-58 & endnote at 451, citing John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (1823), 3 vols., Burt Franklin, New York (1966 reprint), 1:320.

¹⁶ The 1773 Johnson-Steevens edition of *Hamlet* notes the view held by Sir John Hawkins, Samuel Johnson's lawyer, that the gravedigger's comments were sourced in Plowden's report of *Hales v. Petit* (at 311 fn). See Campbell, *op. cit.*; Guernsey, *op. cit.* "Lord Campbell, Keeton, and many other writers have mentioned that the graveyard scene in *Hamlet* reflects that the author of *Hamlet* had some familiarity with Plowden's report on the case of *Hales v. Petit*." Mark Alexander, *The Legally Annotated Hamlet*, <http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/Law/law6.htm#hale>.

¹⁷ Regnier, 125; see also Anderson, *SBAN*, 34-35.

¹⁸ The only use of the word "resolution" in the play occurs during the "to be or not to be" soliloquy. "And thus the native

hue of resolution / Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Folger, III.i.92-93.

¹⁹ Folger, I.v.31-37; III.ii.312-315; III.iii.77-101; V.ii.352-358.

²⁰ "The doctrine of *mens rea* presupposes a dualism of mind and body..." Anthony Platt and Bernard L. Diamond, *The Origins of the Right and Wrong Test of Criminal Responsibility and Its Subsequent Development in the United States: An Historical Survey*, 54 Cal. L. Rev. 1227, 1231 (1966).

²¹ Plowden also reported a case of transferred intent involving liability for poisoning an unintended victim. The report is interesting in relation to Gertrude's drinking the tainted wine intended for Hamlet. In the *Saunders* case, "John Saunders had a wife whom he intended to kill in order that he might marry another woman." Alexander Archer counseled John Saunders on poisoning Saunders's wife with a roasted apple laced with arsenic and roseacre. She sampled the dessert and gave the rest to their young daughter, who died. Archer was held criminally liable. *Regina v. Saunders*, 2 Plowden 473 (1573), 75 English Reports 706 (King's Bench 1575); Penny Crofts, *Wickedness and Crime: Laws of Homicide and Malice* (Routledge 2013).

²² Stephen Gunn, *Archery Practice in Early Tudor England*, 209 Past and Present 54, 59-63 (Merton College, Oxford Univ. 2010). Between 1501-1575 fifty-six fatal archery accidents were recorded in coroner's reports. E.g., arrow shot through target painted on exterior of house punctured wall, killing occupant; "loosing off arrows into the distance, hitting who knew whom." The issues of reckless disregard for others' safety and criminal negligence are beyond the limited scope of this article.

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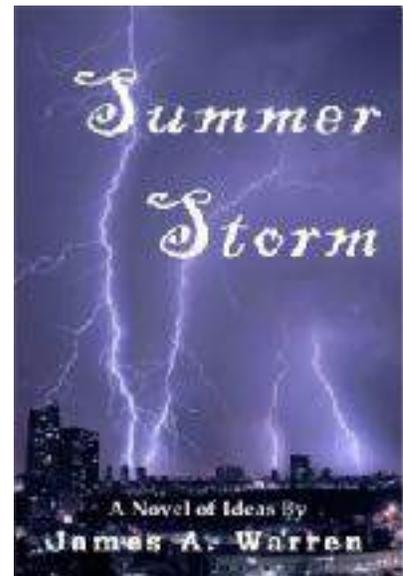
Summer Storm: A Novel of Ideas

Pity university literature professor Alan Fernwood. His life is turned upside down during the eleven weeks of the summer term as he discovers that much of what he had thought was true, isn't. His investigations reveal that William Shakespeare didn't write the works attributed to him. Then his efforts to promote recognition of the true author, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, show just how mistaken he was about the security of his job.

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After “Thought Exercise,” Folger Is Even More Certain Shakspeare is Shakespeare

by Alex McNeil

In an article published on the Folger Shakespeare Library’s website on January 18, 2017, co-written by Folger director Michael Witmore and curator of manuscripts Heather Wolfe, the authors breezily announced that no one needs to waste any more time on the question of who wrote Shakespeare. After a “thought exercise” in which they applied one of the main tests relied on by authorship doubters—is there “documentary evidence produced during Shakespeare’s lifetime that unambiguously links the actor and shareholder to the famous playwright and poet”?—they conclude that such evidence indeed exists. The 2,200-word piece is well worth reading (<http://collation.folger.edu/2017/01/william-shakespeare-post-gentleman/>), but here’s the gist of it.

First, Witmore and Wolfe stated that they really didn’t have to go to all this trouble. “[W]e don’t believe additional smoking guns are necessary when it comes to the authorship of Shakespeare’s plays. We know that Shakespeare wrote the works attributed to him, and that some of these reflect the collaborative working process inherent in writing for performance. . . . While a non-starter for scholars, the anti-Shakespeare movement is a good starting point for understanding how literary historians interpret documents, and this is certainly something worth sharing with the public. Indeed, an understanding of the anti-Shakespeare position informed the writing of the labels and resulted in a prominently displayed panel in the exhibition, ‘Who Wrote the Plays?’”

So, with their “understanding” in place, off they went. They conceded that having the name “William Shakespeare” on the title pages of the plays was not enough; they conceded that William Basse’s elegy to William Shakespeare was not enough, as it was written after Shakspeare’s death (they date the poem to 1618-20); and they conceded that Edmund Howes’s 1615 reference to “Master W. Shakespeare” as a “gentleman” and one of several “excellent poets” was not (by itself) enough, as it didn’t say that the “gentleman” was from Stratford-on-Avon.

Undaunted, Witmore and Wolfe turned their attention to the details of Shakspeare’s application for a coat of arms. [John Shakspeare, William’s father, had first applied for a coat of arms in 1569; it was granted by William Dethick of the College of Arms in 1596; John died in 1601.] Wolfe had earlier discovered (at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston) “an autograph manuscript armorial created by the herald William Smith” begun in 1602 (see *Newsletter*, Summer 2016). She plausibly dates its references to William Shakespeare as a bearer of coat of arms to that year: “For the purpose of anti-

Shakespeare claims, then, the manuscript provides us with a clear reference (ca. 1602) to William Shakespeare as a bearer of a coat of arms, and thus, a gentleman, in a manuscript from his own lifetime.” This thus provides corroboration for Edmund Howes’s 1615 reference to Shakespeare the “gentleman . . . poet” (i.e., it proves he was referring to Stratford Shakspeare, as there weren’t any other Shakespeare gentleman poets).

Witmore and Wolfe then discussed the handwritten annotation “Shakespeare the player” made on an armorial manuscript by Ralph Brooke. They argue that the annotation related to a feud among the heralds (which is well-known) about the granting of arms to unworthy families. Here’s where it gets really interesting—according to Witmore and Wolfe, Brooke’s description of Shakespeare as a player is a “sneering reference” that intentionally *misdescribed* him and was part of Brooke’s effort to “delegitimize Dethick’s earlier grants of arms to John [Shakspeare] and 22 other individuals.” They cite to Brooke’s references to William Sanderson as a “fishmonger” when in fact he was a member of the Fishmongers Company and a financier, and to William Norton as a “bookbinder” when in fact was Master of the Stationers Company. “In this context,” Witmore and Wolfe maintain, “Shakespeare’s identification as a ‘player’ becomes of a piece with the others; it gestures at his actually being something more than, not merely, an actor.” (They later categorize this as “indirect” evidence that William Shakspeare was “something more than a player.”) In conclusion, they throw a backhanded compliment to us skeptics: “To our minds, the ideal explanation of documentary evidence is the one that explains more by assuming less. It turned out, then, that this hypothesis about Shakespeare as a ‘front man’ did have some practical value. Because we had to go through the thought exercise of considering the views of skeptics. . . we ended up learning more and seeing new things.”

What are we to make of this? Quite a bit, and hopefully other Oxfordians will offer more detailed analyses. But I have three major takeaways. First, it’s disappointing that Witmore and Wolfe are deliberately referring to authorship doubters as “anti-Shakesperians.” The term was coined by Stanley Wells and Paul Edmondson in their 2013 book *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*; as Edmondson explained (see “An Hour with Wells and Edmondson,” *Newsletter*, Summer 2015), “We say Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare and to question that does make you anti-Shakespearean. We decided to take a stand. We won’t separate the man from the plays. We won’t do that.” So, in addition to its inaccuracy and offensiveness, “anti-Shakesperean” (or “anti-Shakesperian,” take your pick) is a classic example of presupposing the truth of the proposition you’re arguing. Second, it’s really old news that, after his father’s death in 1601, William Shakspeare pursued the family’s quest for arms. Sure, it’s nice to find

some long-lost contemporaneous documents about all that (one of them in Boston, of all places), but later copies of them have long been known. Anyway, no one disputes that Stratford Will was known as “gentleman.” As for the “Shakespeare the player” annotation, even if it was meant to be derogatory—about which I remain unconvinced without much more—it doesn’t prove that he was a poet, playwright, or any kind of writer (he was also a theater shareholder, for example, so maybe that’s what Brooke had in mind). More to the point, if obtaining a coat of arms was so important to the Shakspeare family, why is there no coat of arms in the Droeshout engraving (or anywhere else) in the 1623 First Folio? Third, Edmund Howes’s 1615 reference to “Master W. Shakespeare” as a “gentleman” and one of several “excellent poets” certainly deserves more attention. True, there’s no evidence that Howes personally knew Will Shakspeare (he uses the phrase “in my owne knowledge” when referring to Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney, Jonson and others, but the implication is that he’s personally familiar with their works). However, if authorship doubters are correct, Howes’s statement is powerful evidence that the effort to put Stratford Will in place as some kind of front man for the true author began during *Shakspeare’s lifetime*, and not, as some argue, in 1623 with the publication of the First Folio and the erection of the Stratford monument.

So, thank you to the Folger for helping us rethink and refine our case!

The Nobility of High Politics in Shakespeare

by Gary B. Goldstein

[Editor’s note: As noted elsewhere (see News, page 4), writings by authorship doubters are attracting more and more mainstream attention. The following article by Gary Goldstein was originally published by *National Review’s* online magazine, NationalReview.com, and ran on its homepage from January 21 to 23, 2017. Goldstein informs us that within a few days it had received more than 5,000 unique page views with an average time on page of almost three minutes, “which means visitors actually read the article.” It also generated numerous comments, pro and con.]

Shakespeare skeptics say his plays must have been written by someone with intimate knowledge of English government affairs.

Every scholar is aware of the precision with which Shakespeare limns contemporary knowledge of medicine, science, and the law in nearly every one of his 37 canonical plays. Yet few are aware that the political behavior depicted by Shakespeare is equally accurate, as attested by modern scholars and especially by modern politicians and diplomats—an assessment that adds to the ongoing controversy over the authorship of the Shakespeare canon.

Shakespeare’s political plays were the ones that most interested Abraham Lincoln. President Lincoln had received the gift of a book, *Notes and Comments upon Certain Plays and Actors of Shakespeare, with Criticism and Correspondence*, from its author, James H. Hackett. He wrote back from the White House on August 17, 1863:

Some of Shakespeare’s plays I have never read, while others I have gone over perhaps as frequently as any unprofessional reader. Among the latter are *Lear*, *Richard Third*, *Henry Eighth*, *Hamlet*, and especially *Macbeth*. I think nothing equals *Macbeth*. It is wonderful.

In noting Lincoln’s fascination with *Macbeth*, Allan Bloom of the University of Chicago highlighted the playwright’s intimate knowledge of political ambition: “The man who could write *Macbeth* so convincingly that a Lincoln believed it to be the perfect illustration of the problems of tyranny and murder must have known about politics; otherwise, however charming its language, the play would not have attracted a man who admittedly did know.”

Shakespeare’s works, which teem with insights into aristocratic life and political intrigue, have endured for 400 years without any link being established between the man who is traditionally considered the author of the plays—William of Stratford, we might call him—and court or political life. This has perplexed many statesmen over the years, such as German chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who said that Shakespeare must have been “in touch with the great affairs of state [and] behind the scenes of political life.”

In fact, historians such as Lily B. Campbell are emphatic about the systematic political uses to which the history plays of Shakespeare were designed. The UCLA professor concluded her 1947 study of the history plays by stating, “Each of the Shakespeare histories serves a special purpose in elucidating a political problem of Elizabeth’s day and in bringing to bear upon this problem the accepted political philosophy of the Tudors.”

Examining Shakespeare’s political philosophy was the aim of the British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. In his essay “What’s in a Name?” he wrote that the best way to discover Shakespeare’s political beliefs was to examine the underlying assumptions taken for granted by all of his characters. What he found was the philosophical outlook of an aristocrat pervaded with longing for the past and gloom about the future, precisely because Shakespeare’s arrival as an artist coincided with the end of the Renaissance. In Trevor-Roper’s analysis, Shakespeare the dramatist supported the feudal social order, detested the Puritans, hated rebellion in all its forms, and tended to ignore God in the canon because he was a cultured aristocrat who was unquestioning in his social and religious conservatism.

In this regard, it is telling that nowhere in

Shakespeare's canon do we find the English Parliament at work. In Elizabeth's time, it met only sporadically, and then only because the Queen called it into session when she needed funds. The legislative powers of Parliament extended only to proposing bills, which could not become law without her approval. For these reasons, access to an insider at the royal court was what represented true political success. As Justice Shallow tells an associate about the visiting Sir John Falstaff, close friend to Prince Hal: "I will use him well. A friend i' th' court is better than a penny in purse." [2 *Henry IV*, 5.1]

In all his plays, Shakespeare presents courtiers as powerful noblemen, even when they appear disguised as itinerant peddlers, as in *The Winter's Tale* (4.4), where balladmonger Autolycus is taken for one by a clown and shepherd on the road:

Clown: This cannot be but a great courtier.

Shepherd: His garments are rich, but he wears them not handsomely.

Clown: He seems to be the more noble in being fantastical: a great man, I'll warrant; I know by the picking on's teeth.

In an interview for the PBS documentary *The Shakespeare Mystery*, Enoch Powell applied his own political experience when probing William Shakespeare's working knowledge of high politics:

I had been a member of the Cabinet, and I'd been in politics for twenty years, and I had some idea of what it's like in the kitchen. And my astonishment was to discover that these were the best works of somebody who'd been in the kitchen. They're written by someone who has lived the life, who has been part of a life of politics and power, who knows what people feel when they are near to the center of power, near to the heat of the kitchen. It's not something which can be transferred, it's not something on which an author, just an author, can be briefed: "Oh, this is how it happened"; it comes straight out of experience—straight out of personal observation—straight out of personal feeling.

The same conclusion was reached by American ambassador Paul Nitze, who thought the Shakespeare plays spoke directly to a life experienced at the center of power. Nitze was President Ronald Reagan's chief negotiator on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (1981–84), an achievement dramatized in the play *A Walk in the Woods*. For more than 40 years, Nitze was one of the chief architects of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. For the television program *Uncovering Shakespeare*, moderated by William F. Buckley Jr., Nitze pointed out:

Many of [the] plays of Shakespeare, of course, deal with people of the upper echelons of the society. Deals with kings and queens and principally courtiers. It's at that level that emotions are extremely tense and rivalries are extremely bitter, and that the important issues cut and bite deeply into the human spirit.

Two years later Nitze expanded upon that assessment in a foreword for *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* There he noted that "as settings for his human dramas, he almost always picks the highest levels of political power." Even more revealing of Shakespeare's value system, in Nitze's view, was the insight that "rulers are his greatest heroes."

As with Powell, so with Nitze—Shakespeare understood the psychology of power as it was actually employed during the English Renaissance, because of his personal history:

Shakespeare knows what it is like at the center of power. He has the insider's knowledge of the way power can be used for good or evil and the consequences that ensue. He understands the struggles that result from the tension between ideals of morality and the needs of statecraft.

Scholars contend that Shakespeare even satirized Elizabeth's secretary of state, Sir Robert Cecil, as King Richard III, and her lord high treasurer, Lord Burghley, as Polonius in *Hamlet*, without suffering consequences. There is no record of William Shakespeare's being brought in for questioning even after the Crown arrested members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men (the theater company for which Shakespeare most often wrote) for performing *Richard II* on the eve of the Earl of Essex's rebellion in 1601.

Is it surprising, then, that so many modern politicians have concluded that only a nobleman living at the apex of Elizabethan society and government could have written Shakespeare?

— Gary B. Goldstein is the author of the recently published *Reflections on the True Shakespeare* and a former editor of *The Elizabethan Review*, a journal on the English Renaissance. He was a co-producer of the 1992 television special *Uncovering Shakespeare*, moderated by William F. Buckley Jr.



The Dedication to *Shake-speares Sonnets*

by Dennis Baron

Shake-speares Sonnets was entered in the Stationers Register on May 20, 1609, and was published by Thomas Thorpe a little later with the following dedication by “T.T.” (presumably Thorpe himself):

TO. THE. ONLIE. BEGETTER. OF. THESE.
INSVING. SONNETS. MR. W.H. ALL.
HAPPINESSE. AND. THAT ETERNITIE.
PROMISED. BY. OVR. EVER-LIVING. POET.
WISHETH. THE. WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTVRER. IN. SETTING. FORTH.

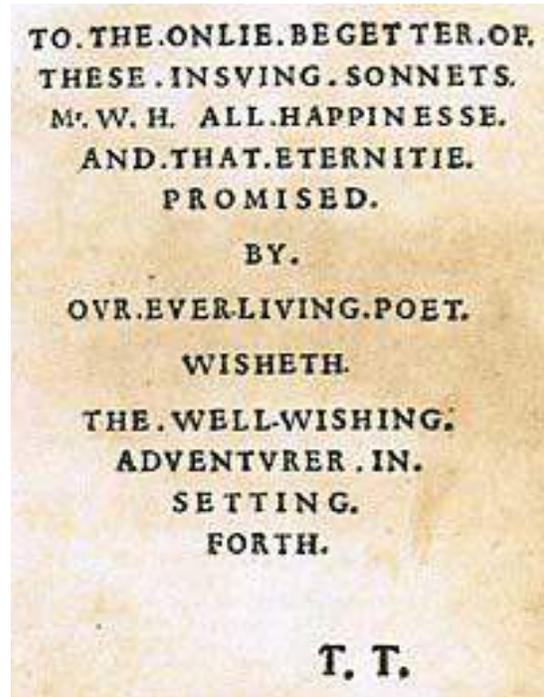
The dedication has been described as “arguably the most enigmatic book dedication in history” and as “a Riddle of the Sphinx for Shakespeare scholars.”

There are two main reasons why it presents such a puzzle to the Shakespeare establishment. First, there is a full stop after each word which, in effect, means that the dedication has no true punctuation. Second, the Shakespeare establishment is certain that Shakespeare was William Shakspere of Stratford-on-Avon who died in 1616, seven years after the publication of the *Sonnets*.

Of all the works attributed to Shakespeare, the author acknowledged only the two long narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, as having been written by himself; this he did by dedicating them to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, in 1593 and 1594, respectively, and subscribing his name to those dedications.

The most obvious direct link between the *Sonnets* and the two narrative poems is that they all carry the name of the author (“William Shakespeare” on the narrative poems, and “Shake-speare” on the *Sonnets*). A second likely connection is that Southampton, the dedicatee of the narrative poems, is the addressee of the first 126 sonnets, the so-called “Fair Youth.” Thus, it would not be too surprising if a connection could be found between Thorpe’s 1609 dedication and Shakespeare’s earlier two.

The first part of the connection is that from 1601 to 1603, the Earl of Southampton was imprisoned in the Tower of London for his part in the Essex Rebellion. As a consequence of his treason conviction, he was stripped of his earldom and forfeited his lands and estates. During that period he no longer held any titles of nobility and had become a commoner: Mr. Wriothesley, Henry, or the “Mr. W. H.” of the 1609 dedication. (Shortly after his release from the Tower in 1603, King James restored his titles and estates.) So the Earl of Southampton is the “onlie begetter,” the subject



of and inspiration for most of the sonnets, as well as being the dedicatee of the earlier narrative poems.

The second connection, and the key to understanding the dedication, can be found in two phrases: “all happinesse” and “wisheth the well-wishing.”

The words “all happiness” are the last two words of Shakespeare’s *Lucrece* dedication to Southampton in 1594. This would seem to suggest that, fifteen years later, Thomas Thorpe is wishing “Mr. W. H.” exactly what Shakespeare wished him as the Earl of Southampton: “I wish you long life still lengthened with all happiness.”

The words “wisheth the well-wishing” not only echo “I wish” from the *Lucrece* dedication, but also the main clause in the last sentence of the 1593 *Venus and Adonis* dedication, where Shakespeare leaves Southampton “to your heart’s content, which I wish may always answer your own wish” (note that both phrases use the word “wish” twice).

In the two narrative poem dedications Shakespeare is wishing Southampton all happiness and whatever Southampton wishes for himself. Furthermore, Southampton is the only inspiration for *Shake-speare’s Sonnets*. Therefore, it is logical to infer that Shakespeare and Southampton should be the only two persons that are being referred to in Thorpe’s dedication: Southampton as “Mr. W. H.” and Shakespeare as the “well-wishing adventurer.”

We can now look at the 1609 dedication again and, with more relevant punctuation and modern spelling, see it from a new perspective.

To the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets
Mr. W.H., all happiness; and that eternity,
promised by our ever living poet, wisheth the
well wishing adventurer in setting forth.

The dedication is in two parts. In the first it is
Thorpe who wishes “all happiness” to the Earl of
Southampton; in the second it is the well-wishing
Shakespeare who has set out on an adventurous
journey to eternity.

As Shakespeare writes in sonnet 17: “Who will
believe my verse in time to come.” In sonnet 55: “Not
marble, nor the gilded monuments of princes shall out
live this powerful rhyme. In sonnet 81: “Your
monument shall be my gentle verse, which eyes not yet
created shall o`er read... You still shall live, such virtue
hath my pen.” And in sonnet 107: “Since spite of him
(death) I`ll live in this poor rhyme, while he insults o`er
dull and speechless tribes; and thou in this shall find
thy monument, when tyrants` crests and tombs of brass
are spent.”

Shakespeare believes that his verse is eternal and,
by the virtue of his pen, the “Fair Youth” will be
immortalized. The well-wishing adventurer,
Shakespeare, has set forth on his journey to eternity;

and Shakespeare, the ever-living poet, promised that
eternity for himself in the sonnets.

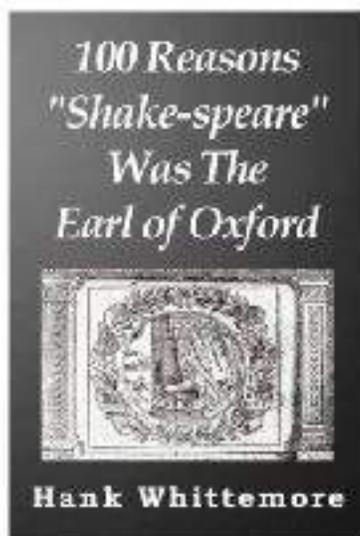
It is generally accepted that the term “ever-living
poet” refers to someone who has already died and who,
through his verse, will live on through eternity. “Ever-
living” was never used to describe a living poet. Therefore,
Shakespeare, the “well-wishing adventurer” is dead; and
Shakespeare, the “ever-living poet,” is also dead.

So why did Thorpe refer to Shakespeare twice, as
both the “well-wishing adventurer” and “our ever-living
poet”? To establish stronger connections to the 1593 and
1594 dedications. Thorpe wanted his dedication to reflect
the main clause in the last sentence of the *Venus and
Adonis* dedication and the wish for happiness in the
Lucrece dedication. The first part of Thorpe’s 1609
dedication is addressed to the Earl of Southampton; the
second part is more like a message of condolence or
consolation on the death of a relative or close friend.

What is quite certain from Thorpe’s dedication is that
in 1609 William Shakespeare—the author of *Venus and
Adonis*, *Lucrece* and *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*—was dead.



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Book Reviews

Shakespeare Unravalled—Court Plays: the 1623 Deception

By Pauline and Michael Black (CPI Books, Croydon, England, 2014)

Reviewed by Peter W. Dickson

This recent book advances an authorship theory that has lurked in the background for some decades. It is the claim that the Shakespeare canon largely emerged from the literary circle associated with Wilton House, with the patronage and even personal literary contributions of the Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney, mother of the “Incomparable Paire”—William and Philip Herbert—to whom the First Folio was dedicated in 1623.

The authors of this book, independent historians Michael and Pauline Black, refer to Robin P. Williams’s 2006 book, *Sweet Swan of Avon: Did A Woman Write Shakespeare?*, which championed a Wilton House-based authorship theory; some Oxfordians made room as early as 1930 for the Countess of Pembroke within an Oxford-centric group theory, as can be seen in Gilbert Slater’s book, *Seven Shakespeares*.

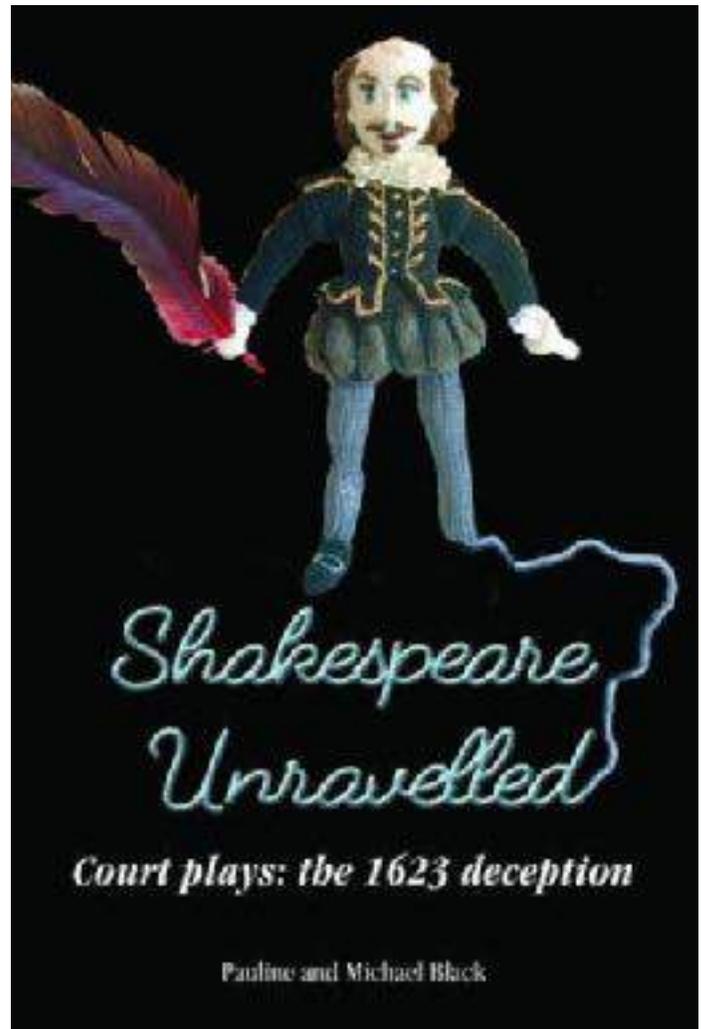
The authors provide no endnotes or footnotes in their book, even though they rely heavily on the scholarship of other authors, such as Williams and myself. In the late 1990s I was the first to show how the Spanish Marriage Crisis of the early 1620s provided the political impetus for the sudden rush in late 1621 to assemble the First Folio as a patriotic response to King James’s extremely controversial, and ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to achieve a dynastic union by marrying his sole male heir (Prince Charles) to a granddaughter of Phillip II, who had launched the Armada in 1588.

The Pembroke Authorship Paradigm: For and Against

When looking at a Pembroke-based authorship theory, one of the most intriguing pieces of evidence is a letter found at Wilton House in the 1860s, now lost, in which the Countess writes to her oldest son concerning King James’s expected visit to Wilton House in late 1603 and notes that “the man Shakespeare will be among us.”

Although this letter legislates against a mono-Pembroke authorship theory, the reference to “the man Shakespeare” has caused some, such as Gilbert long ago, to wonder if it implied a female co-Bard, especially since it is impossible to ignore the fact that the First Folio was dedicated to the sons of the Countess of Pembroke, not to the sons of other alternative Bard candidates or to the daughters of Will Shakspeare, the incumbent Bard.

Williams and the Blacks reach different conclusions about what input the Countess might have had on the Shakespeare works. Williams claims that the Wilton House literary circle became “the seedbed of a literary



revolution,” but she holds to a single author theory—Mary Sidney—as opposed to any of the numerous writers who enjoyed her patronage such as Spenser, Greville, Daniel, Drayton, Breton, Watson and Faunce. She dismisses well-known alternative Bard candidates—Bacon, Marlowe, Neville and Oxford—as not credible.

In contrast, the Blacks champion a group theory. In the first sentence of their book they draw an analogy to the numerous scholars who prepared the King James version of the Bible which, along with the First Folio, became the twin pillars of Anglo-Saxon culture and the English language. Like Williams, they review four best-known proposed alternative Bards—Bacon, Marlowe, Oxford and Derby (William Stanley)—but do so only in an appendix where they reject them (and also by implication the Countess of Pembroke) as single authors, which is not surprising because Williams’s mono-Pembroke theory falls apart given that the idea of a female author for the Sonnets makes no sense.

Unlike Williams, the Blacks do allow some room for the aforesaid four writers, including Oxford, within a group authorship paradigm. But they whittle down Oxford in favor of John Florio as the probable author of the dramas set in Italy because they believe a native Italian would have been more likely than Oxford to have

the knowledge of intimate details pertaining to locales and the culture of that region. They devote a substantial chapter to a respectful evaluation of Richard Roe's landmark work, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* (2011), in their strenuous attempt to find a non-Oxfordian candidate as the author of the Italian-based dramas.

It is important to emphasize that *Shakespeare Unravelled* focuses overwhelmingly on the plays. Given their strong commitment to a group theory, the authors seem uncomfortable is dealing with the Bard's poetic works. They have little to say about, and provide no page citations in their index for, the two inaugural narrative poems, published in 1593 and 1594, or the Sonnets, published in 1609. They see the Sonnets as "very personal" and conclude their publication was suppressed, but they offer no thoughts as to who wrote them, why or when they were written, or why they were published at all.

That is the same for *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). The Blacks are content simply to recount the different reactions to these works by Joseph Hall and John Marston. Those writers alluded to a secret poet they called "Labeo" or "mediocria firma." As the latter phrase was the motto of the Bacon family, the Blacks are confident that these allusions point "decisively" to the poet being either Anthony or Francis Bacon, "trained as lawyers and both were poets." That this is all that the Blacks have to offer concerning the poetic works is a serious shortcoming in a work attempting to solve the literary mystery.

A Pembroke Group Theory On Steroids

Be that as it may, the Blacks champion a group theory that grows by leaps and bounds as the book progresses. In their last chapter they defend their group theory by insisting that the four major alternative candidates fail as sole authors of the canon due to too many "anomalies and contradictions." Given these fatal flaws concerning the major candidates, the Blacks make a strong argument that a single author could not have produced the entire Shakespeare canon:

[T]he immense vocabulary employed and the hugely varying styles shown in the thirty-six plays militates against a sole writer. No other author has ever existed who exhibits the facility, learning and creative scope of the presumed author of the First Folio. (258)

This statement would, of course, also rule out Mary Sidney, which is why the Blacks break ranks with Williams, upon whose prior research they nevertheless heavily draw. However, they seem to waffle at one point when they acknowledge the swans in the lace collar in a famous portrait of Mary Sidney/Herbert and the well-known reference to the Bard as "the Sweet Swan of Avon." They suggest that "the most convincing explanation for the swan metaphor is that Ben Jonson is

indeed honoring Mary Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke" (95).

But if so, this would mean that Jonson was fingering the Countess as the sole author of the Shakespeare plays. This contradiction, and others in their book, are due to the amorphous and rambling character of the Blacks' group theory which goes way beyond a just few pens to mushroom into a veritable battalion of possible, even probable, coauthors.

Indeed, as noted, the Blacks actually make room for Oxford, Bacon, Greville, Stanley and Edward Dyer on the grounds that "a justifiable argument" can be made for individual contributions from these men or their collaboration with others. But they are not satisfied to include only these writers in their group theory. They postulate a much larger group authorship by adding that "there is no doubt too that were contributions made to the early plays, the later compositions and the final versions of many of the plays in the First Folio by numerous writers" (258).

Whom do the Blacks have in mind? Well, just about everyone active in this time period because they suggest fifteen writers as "likely" collaborators: Florio (Michelangelo as well as his son John), Dyer, Anthony Bacon, Middleton, Fletcher, Greene, Drayton, Peele, Davies, Daniel, Harvey, Dekker, Chettle and Jonson.

This amounts to a group authorship theory on steroids with some twenty or more pens behind the canon, a theory which goes well beyond the conviction that the Blacks share with Williams that it was the Wilton House literary circle, supported by the generous patronage of the extended Sidney-Herbert family with its commitment to the Protestant cause and humanist orientation, that served as "the seedbed" or primary channel for the English literary renaissance in the 16th century.

The Blacks do not consider Oxford's acting companies or the Stanley family's deep association with, and patronage of, literature and the theater to be in the same league.

The major problem with this dismissal of the Stanleys (William and his older brother Ferdinando) for the Blacks (and for those who cling to a mono-Oxfordian theory) is that the eight actors listed in the First Folio after Richard Burbage as members of the King's Men were members of Ferdinando's troupe, known as the Lord Strange's Men (which after Ferdinando's assassination in April 1594 quickly transformed into the new Lord Chamberlain's Men, later renamed the King's Men in 1603).

Thus, it was Ferdinando's actors, not those of the Herbert family or Oxford, who became known as Shakespeare's company, which in turn became the central repository for the Bard's dramas and whose repertoire was protected by the special and acknowledged right to perform these particular dramas.

I maintain that, over time, this situation resulted in a

mixed canon that included both the repertoire of Lord Strange's Men, to which either or both of the Stanley brothers could have made contributions, and the dramas of Oxford after the Queen and Burghley moved quickly after Ferdinand's assassination to marry Elizabeth de Vere (Oxford's daughter and Burghley's granddaughter) to the new heir to the throne in accordance with the Third Act of Succession: namely, William Stanley, the Sixth Earl of Derby. (For more on this family-based authorship paradigm, see my two-volume work: *Bardgate: Shakespeare and the Royalists Who Stole the Bard* [2011] and *Shakespeare, Catholicism and the Politics of the First Folio* [2016].)

In any case, the bottom line is that it is impossible to get a handle on the Blacks' hyper-group theory because it involves so many pens. It is true that they suggest certain candidates for specific dramas such as Thomas Middleton for *The Tempest*, the Bacon brothers (Anthony and Francis) for *Love's Labors Lost*, and Fulke Greville for *Antony and Cleopatra*, but they provide no detailed literary or philological analysis to support their suggestions.

Shakespeare Unravelling in a Disjointed Fashion

The authors' overarching message in *Shakespeare Unravelling* is that the First Folio—a tsunami-like wave “sixty years in the making” since 1560, the Blacks tell us—brought to a conclusion an English literary renaissance which they spend almost the first half of their book describing before articulating their mega-group theory.

To be fair, even though their extended discussion of this literary renaissance makes for a disjointed presentation, it contains a great deal of valuable information about writers, their patrons, the censorship regime, the political issues and conflicts of the time (especially the pervasive fear of “creeping Catholicism” in the form of plots against the Queen Elizabeth and King James), as well as important connections among authors.

Furthermore, the chapter devoted to the main arguments in favor of the traditional Bard from Stratford-upon-Avon offers a searing critique of this claim which is as devastating as any presently available in print.

Unfortunately, they present their own counter-theory in a piecemeal fashion. Numerous and lengthy interruptions are devoted to side issues such as whether Henry VII was a Beaufort or a Tudor, the history of the Order of the Garter, the everpresent conspiratorial threats posed by Catholicism to the regime, and plans for a mammoth amphitheater to be built at the beginning of King James's reign. Even the excellent, detailed critique of the Stratfordian claim tends to undercut their thesis about what role the incumbent Bard actually played in the authorship mystery.

For example, the authors advance the credible suggestion that the incumbent Bard was essentially a “chip off the old block” (i.e., his father John

Shakespeare) by documenting how frequently the father became engaged in shady dealings and avaricious conduct when it came to business and the making of money. But beyond that, the Blacks emphasize how extraordinarily wealthy the son became by concurring in the estimate made by A. J. Pointon in his book, *The Man Who Was Never Shakespeare*, that as a successful and even rapacious businessman, William annually earned the equivalent of £200,000 (roughly \$300,000 when Pointon's book was published in 2011).

The problem here is that the staggering wealth of the Stratfordian Bard calls into question the authors' claim that he spent a lot of time as a scribe in London and in the process somehow became the custodian, and perhaps even the owner, of the rights to the Shakespeare plays. They never provide a credible explanation why a man so rich and otherwise engaged in so many lucrative business ventures in his own hometown in the Midlands would bother to find the time to become a scribe for dramas whose performance rights were firmly in the hands of the one acting company—the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later known as the King's men)—which was on the royal payroll.

The Blacks maintain that there is no hard evidence that the Stratford man was ever a member of these two acting companies. But if that is so, and if the thirty-six plays passed through so many hands over such a long time as the Blacks insist was the case, how does this wealthy but non-intellectual, uncultured fellow, a mere scribe, acquire the ability to gain control of so many playhouse manuscripts in the face of the censorship regime, the copyright law which exclusively favored printers in the Stationers' Guild, and the important roles played by the Lord Chamberlain and the Master of the Revels in determining what could be performed and published?

The authors' argument regarding the Stratford man and his connection to the Shakespearean works remains murky. They accept the traditional claim that he was an investor in the Globe theater, and while they seem to suggest that he might have been an actor for a time with other troupes which did not enjoy royal patronage, they believe that he gained access to dramas and made money as a dealer or middleman in the “the cut and thrust of the competing London playgroups and the popular theater” (15).

Perhaps he could have made some money in the marketing of dramas not in the firm control of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and then the King's Men. But how would this link him to the disposition of the Shakespearean dramas? Furthermore, given that that sixteen Shakespeare plays (nearly half the canon) were never published before the First Folio appeared seven years after the death of the Stratfordian Bard in 1616, the money he could have earned in peddling the other half of the canon during his lifetime to printers in London would have been a mere pittance compared to the huge sums of

money he already earned from his various business ventures and investments.

The Murky Logic of Deception

Finally, the authors never provide a credible and coherent explanation of how and when the incumbent Bard became party to what I described as “Bardgate”—namely, the process by which mere concealment, via the use of a pen name to protect those behind the Shakespearean works, gave way to a full-blown deception by which the Bard’s identity was devolved onto the Stratford man, in my view almost certainly after his death.

The closest the Blacks come to a statement about the logic and the operational aspects of a plan to deceive others about the true authorship is in a passage in their introduction where they suggest that, given the paranoia about a possible restoration of Catholicism and the threat of an Inquisition being established in England, the Sidney-Herbert family concluded that it had an obligation to “protect living writers and editors from the threatened Inquisition.”

Hence, the idea of finding a surrogate or fake Bard, such as the merchant with a similar name from the Midlands, would not have surfaced prior to 1621 when the Spanish Marriage Crisis began to intensify. The silence at the time of the death of the Stratford man in April 1616 is consistent with this conclusion.

But if King James had succeeded in achieving a dynastic union with Catholic Spain in 1623, and if an Inquisition had ensued, the vague allusions to an author named “William Shakespeare” would not have protected the printers and publishers named on the Folio’s title page if there was any chance of a retaliation during the Counterreformation in England. Nor would the Shakespeare name have protected the two Protestant Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery—William and Philip Herbert—because they are clearly identified in the Folio’s ornate frontispiece and the dedication to them by the two royal actors Henry Condell and John Hemmings.

In their effort to mimic (without citation) my prior political contextualization of the First Folio project, the Blacks remain clueless about the incumbent Bard’s revealing purchase in 1613 of the Blackfriars Gatehouse, the notorious Catholic hideout in London, and a growing mountain of biographical evidence which since the late 1990s has fueled a bitter schism among mainstream Shakespeare scholars as to whether their man was a Church Papist, meaning an outwardly conforming, but diehard, hard-core Catholic.

There is a growing trail of evidence that the Stratfordian Bard clung to Catholicism during the Counterreformation, which was an existential threat to the Queen and her regime, and that he “died a papist,” in the words of the Anglican Archdeacon, Richard Davies. This evidence clashes sharply with the notion that those behind the First Folio project would have selected such a

fellow to serve as a physical surrogate for a writer or writers associated with a literary circle protected by the staunchly Protestant Herbert-Sidney family and also the fervently anti-Catholic Fulke Greville, who once claimed that he was “the Master of Shakespeare” and whom the Blacks suggest contributed to, and helped prepare, the Folio.

The authors make no effort to explain the timing of the deception, or why the First Folio does not unequivocally finger the Stratford man as the true Bard, something that could have been done easily by including the Shakespeare-Arden family coat of arms (to which the authors devote an entire chapter) in the Folio. They also fail to discuss the fact that the apparent fake Bard was buried in anonymous tomb in his hometown church, which makes no sense if he was supposed to serve as a physical surrogate in death as well as life for whoever wrote the celebrated literary works.

Conclusions and a Lingering Imponderable Mystery

Taking everything into account, *Shakespeare Unravelling*, which has the word “deception” in its subtitle, is inadequate and unravels under close scrutiny.

Nonetheless, I found parts of it quite intriguing, and it raised in my mind an important question: What would have happened to the First Folio project if the marriage negotiations had not failed and Prince Charles and Buckingham had returned to England with the Spanish bride in September 1623?

Here we encounter the imponderables associated with what is characterized as “counterfactual” history. Given the absence of any moves to create the Folio prior to 1621, perhaps it never would have come into existence without the impetus of the Spanish Marriage Crisis. What we do know is that, despite the enormous investment in typesetting and proofreading for this massive 1,000-page anthology of plays, the registration of the sixteen unpublished works (almost half the total) for inclusion in the Folio took place in November 1623, only after it was certain that the Spanish Match had failed.

Such a delayed registration is most unusual, unless those behind the First Folio who opposed the marriage had some genuine anxiety about becoming politically trapped and perhaps finding themselves forced to salvage the project by dedicating it to the patron of the King’s Men—King James himself, whose dramatic and dangerous tilt toward Spain they loathed as English patriots. What they would have done if events had not broken in their favor remains unknowable. However, their conspicuous and bold refusal to dedicate the Folio to the exalted patron of the acting company associated with a dramatist known as “William Shakespeare”—the misguided, unsuccessful and ultimately humiliated King James—is clear testimony to the original political thrust behind the First Folio project.

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***Summer Storm: A Novel of Ideas* by James A. Warren
(CreateSpace, 2016; 396 pp.)**

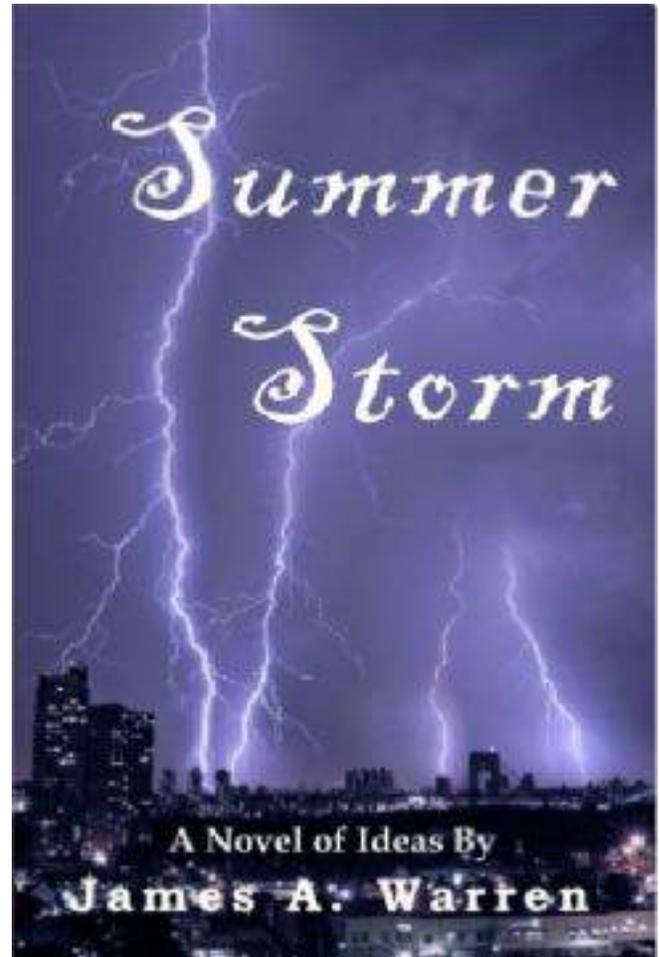
Reviewed by Bonner Miller Cutting

James Warren, a diplomat by profession (and board member of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship), has written a novel exploring the reluctance of mainstream academia to engage in the Shakespeare Authorship Question. The story opens at the beginning of the summer term at Cary University, where Alan Fernwood, a professor in the English Department, is planning to devote his summer to Shakespeare projects. Along with his Shakespeare Summer Seminar, in which he will lead six graduate students in discussions of Shakespeare's works, he plans to write a missive to refute what he believes are the contemptible Shakespeare authorship conspiracy theories. To this end, he purchases Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, confident that he will destroy the fantasies he expects to find there. As the professor chews over the arguments put forth by Ogburn and others, it provides a platform for the author to highlight the reasons why the subject of the authorship of the Shakespeare canon is suitable for academic debate.

While this might seem a predictable plot line for conversations about the authorship question, Warren has freighted his story with a remarkable array of cultural subjects and even political issues. It might be said that the book is all over the spectrum, but Warren handles the diverse material with a skilled touch, surprising in a newly minted novelist. Warren can well justify the subtitle: "A Novel of Ideas." The class discussions are conducted at a high level, enabling Warren to explore Shakespearean concepts in depth. The usual themes in Shakespeare are all there to be dissected by the class—the struggle between appearance and reality, the politics of the ruling elite, issues of marriage, love and war. But with a twist, as Warren insightfully connects Shakespeare's works to contemporary fiction and nonfiction, movies and television, classical and pop music, turning his book into an exhilarating trip through a wide range of cultural history. The classroom information is further organized in an appendix to the novel, with lesson plans and lists of the Shakespeare quotes discussed in the book.

But not all is confined to the classroom. One of the graduate students, Amelia Mai, is a Fulbright Scholar from Vietnam. Not incidentally, she is an attractive young woman, recently divorced with a young child. The developing romance between Alan and Amelia allows for the inclusion of ideas from Asian society and its cultural norms and values, bringing another dimension to the story.

Warren is at his very best when describing Stratfordians who, as he points out, are "fierce defenders of their fort and hostile to any attempt to discuss the authorship issue." He purports that the mechanisms that



led to the paradigm changes in several historical controversies—notably Darwin's evolution and Wegener's plate tectonics—can be models for breaching the defenses of mainstream academia. Also, to better understand the institutional armamentarium, Warren sifts through the standard works of literary criticism including the *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, uncovering the weaknesses in the academic position on Shakespeare's life and work. A quote from Dr. Roger Stritmatter sums up the battlefield: "There is, of course, a price to be paid for admission into academia. The initiate must solemnly promise not only to forgo dalliance in the field of unauthorized ideas, but to zealously defend, as a matter of honor and sanity, the jurisdiction of the paradigm into which he has been initiated."

Warren deserves credit for the meticulous research that has gone into his novel. Indeed, he takes a heck of a risk by examining climate change science through the surrogate of a young journalist who, as the story develops, falls in love with Professor Fernwood's daughter. Whether readers agree or disagree with the explications of climate science as reported by the journalist, the point is still the same: Discussions of controversial issues tend to be one-sided, and many academics actively oppose the open exchange of ideas.

The book is an easy read, a good story with discussions of Shakespeare's works and the arguments supporting the Shakespeare Authorship Question incorporated smoothly into the narrative. In addition, Warren has a way with words. There is something memorable on just about every page. A favorite quote: "The internal pressures include the human proclivity for forming emotional attachments to ideas and beliefs as well as to people and things. It was an odd human trait that those attachments remained in place even after all the original reasons for a belief had been demolished."

100 Reasons Shake-speare was the Earl of Oxford
By Hank Whittemore
(2016, Forever Press, Somerville, MA; 352 pp.)

Reviewed by Walter Hurst

How do you write a review about a book you enjoyed so much that you literally could not put it down—even when you *knew* you had other work that had to be done? Perhaps you simply tell the reader some of the many aspects of the book that you liked, and hit some of the "best bits." The book in question is Hank Whittemore's new work, *100 Reasons Shake-speare Was the Earl of Oxford*, a thoroughly enlightening and enjoyable foray into the specifics of the case for the authorship of the Shakespearean canon by Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

In sharp contrast to the recent Stratfordian claim that the man from Stratford was a "player" and therefore a writer, Whittemore presents actual, logical, and thoroughly convincing evidence that de Vere was "Shakespeare." He does so in a highly organized and provocative way, too. You would think that he would lead off with his best reasons (which is, frankly, what I wanted him to do), and he gives some impressive ones at the start of his 100-reason list.

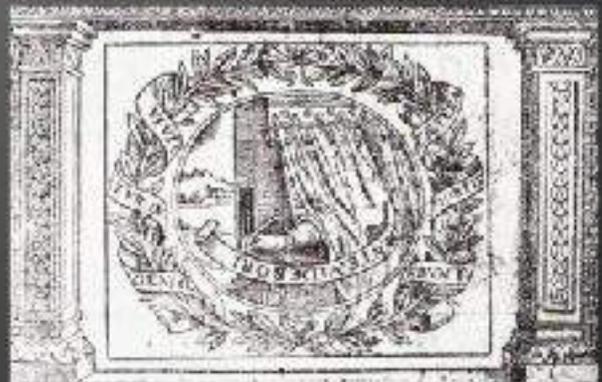
Beginning with the first chapter, Whittemore demonstrates that Oxford, unlike the man from Stratford, was a true man of the theatre. Reading about de Vere's many theatrical enterprises and experiences, including strong presentations of him as a patron as well as a "court jester" (or "allowed fool"), we find a man intimately involved in the production of plays from beginning to end. De Vere was a man who knew the theatre and understood its power.

In his second chapter, Whittemore concentrates on the striking and unmistakable similarities between the life of Edward de Vere and the story of his most unforgettable character, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Ten riveting and convincing passages later, every reader will be struck by the overwhelming, and perhaps eerie, sense that *Hamlet* is the most autobiographical insight into the life of the author in the history of English literature. Strong arguments,

thoroughly researched and well presented, make the connection intimate and undeniable to all but the most self-deluded Stratford believer.

Whittemore continues the assault on those invested in the Stratfordian myth by identifying specific evidence connecting the Earl of Oxford to the works of Shakespeare. There are gems here, such as Richard Edwards and the "cry of the hounds" at a 1566 performance that Oxford attended, to be echoed later by Duke Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and a wonderful recounting of the incident at Gad's Hill. Perhaps the strongest argument of all for the authorship of Shakespeare's works is presented in Reason 19, "Oxford's Geneva Bible." Whittemore succinctly sums up the amazing narrative of its acquisition by the Folger Shakespeare Library and the intensive and groundbreaking research of Roger Stritmatter that exposed its underlined and annotated passages and their startling linkage to the works of Shakespeare. While Whittemore might have begun his book with this "Reason," his organization of the various reasons is both logical and powerful, and the Geneva Bible remains a

*100 Reasons
 Shake-speare
 was the
 Earl of Oxford*



Hank Whittemore

showpiece of any cogent argument for de Vere's authorship of the works.

Space does not permit an exhaustive review of all the chapters of the book, but there are many highlights that should be mentioned. Together they constitute the "pillars of the argument" for the Earl of Oxford. In addition to the chapters above, Whittemore dives into discussions of Oxford as an acknowledged writer, the University Wits, and his known connections with other writers and poets. Oxford's intimate connection with the life and times of England, and Queen Elizabeth in particular, is covered in several places, including chapters on "Writers in Wartime" and "The French Match."

One of the most important chapters deals with the connection of Oxford, "Shakespeare," and the Italian performance genre known as *Commedia dell'arte*. This form of theatre, essentially unknown in Elizabethan England, was the basis for dozens of Shakespeare's most memorable characters and plotlines. It is unthinkable that the playwright could not have had profound and intimate knowledge of this emerging art form. A thorough examination of the connection is both skillful and compelling. Whittemore gives high praise to Richard Roe for his remarkable work on Shakespeare's Italian connection, and notes that Oxford traveled extensively in Italy, absorbing Italian history, art, politics and culture in a way that Shakespeare would share with the world in his works. Whittemore also acknowledges the groundbreaking work of Dr. Noemi Magri and her revelation concerning Titian's personal copy of his "Venus and Adonis" painting, and its Shakespearean connection.

Whittemore demonstrates extraordinary restraint as well. Although he has previously authored *The Monument*, an exhaustive study of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, only two of his 100 reasons are grounded on those poems. This speaks to the overall strength of his argument for Oxford's authorship. While Whittemore could have chosen to write a dozen or more reasons for this conclusion based upon the *Sonnets*, he instead summarizes Oxford's links and his relationship to the *Sonnets*. He does so in a logical and condensed manner, making the linkage a powerful and irrefutable reason to conclude that de Vere was indeed the author of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

Chapter 12, "Oxford's Special Knowledge," is also a highlight. It is universally accepted that Shakespeare had a vast range of knowledge and expertise—foreign languages, music, classical literature, law, medicine, warfare, sailing, and intimate political machinations at court, to name a few. The connections between de Vere's known proficiency in these subjects and Shakespeare's works represent another pillar of the many bases for his assertion of Oxford's authorship.

Specific references to de Vere in the plays themselves are also discussed in Chapters 14 and 15. Characters such as Bertram and Othello are pondered, and devices used in Shakespeare such as the "bed trick" are analyzed in the

context of their Oxfordian associations. These chapters bear close reading and thought: Whittemore carefully investigates both the widely known references (such as the bed trick) and some lesser-known ones as well, such as the fascinating story of Edmund Campion and his connection to Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. These connections, well organized for the reader's consideration, are also strong evidence for an Oxfordian authorship conclusion.

Whittemore sums up and saves some of his most powerful reasons for last. His "Final Stages" chapter, being read after the previous 88 reasons are proposed and deliberated, constitutes a mighty and authoritative conclusion to the work. My favorite reason in this chapter was Number 91, "Dramatic Literature." Here Whittemore makes what for me is his best case for the Oxfordian side:

This evidence comprises one of the most important, yet among the least noticed, of the reasons why Oxford is Shakespeare. The plays are masterpieces of dramatic literature—they are works the author has written and rewritten, over long stretches of time, not primarily for playgoing audiences, but for carefully attentive readers. Most can be fully appreciated only when, in addition to be seen and heard, they are read and reread. But to comprehend how they were produced in final form requires a viewpoint wholly opposite from that of Stratfordian tradition.

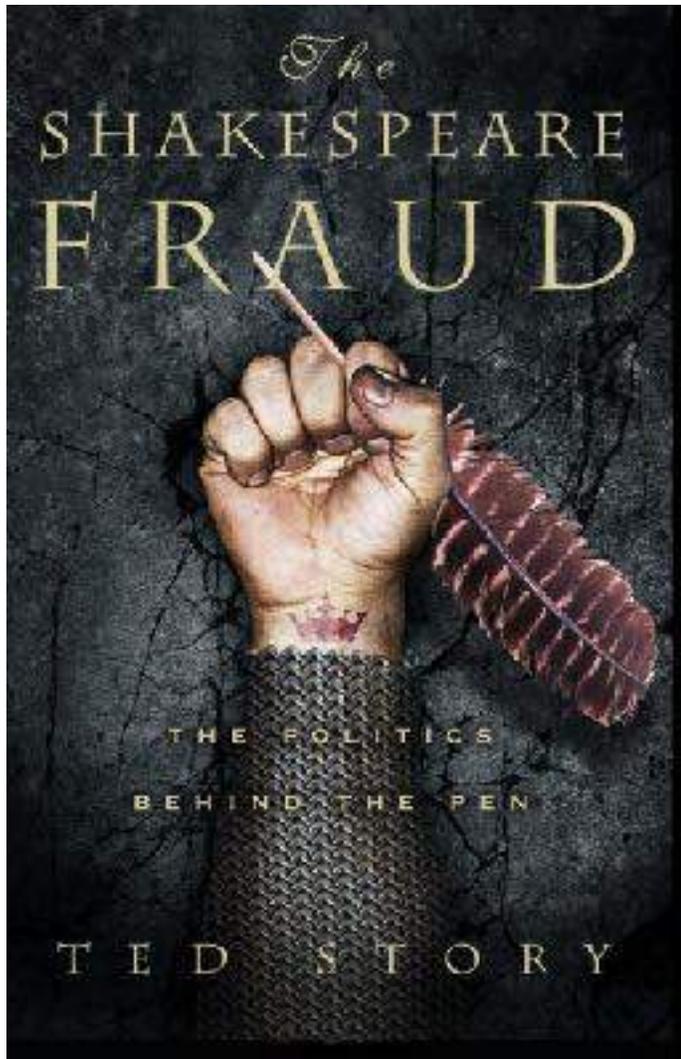
As a writer and a playwright himself, Whittemore makes the overwhelming and ultimately effective case for de Vere's authorship with his *100 Reasons Shakespeare was the Earl of Oxford*. His book is thoroughly researched, eminently readable, and, for those of us with time constraints on our reading, it can be absorbed in small doses as well. He is also very convincing. If you can, try to persuade a Stratfordian to read a few reasons. Have them pick a number between 1 and 100, and then read that particular reason. If that does not get them interested, they are probably too far gone to listen to reason, let alone a hundred reasons.

***The Shakespeare Fraud: The Politics behind the Pen*
By Ted Story
(2016, Forever Press, Somerville, MA, 131 pp.)**

Reviewed by Walter Hurst

Ted Story, a long-time actor, director, and producer of theatre, has chosen to approach the Shakespeare Authorship Question in a unique manner. In his book *The Shakespeare Fraud*, he presents the background and intrigue of the Elizabethan and Jacobean royal courts and interweaves this information into a narrative describing the rise and fall—and rise again—of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

At every turn, Story strives mightily to "connect the dots," as he puts it, and make sense out of the events of



that turbulent, highly charged, and creatively explosive era. His method is to pick a certain time and set of people or circumstances, give us a timeline of events connected to those people, places, and things, and then to construct a narrative that attempts to make sense of it all by filling in the “blank spots” with informed speculation about what happened and, most importantly, why it happened. The focus is constantly on de Vere, but the side plots are extraordinarily interesting, too. Story’s “Cast of Characters,” which begins the book, is not only a Who’s Who of renaissance England, but also inclusive of the Shagspere clan (his spelling). They too have big parts to play in the missive.

The format is certainly different from what you might expect in such a volume. After the title of each chapter (e.g., “Oxford, the Banishment Years,” “Happy Birthday, Prince”), Story presents “The Timeline,” listing in chronological order the events that he will consider in that chapter. These multiple and sometimes seemingly unrelated events are encapsulated within a short narrative, rarely longer than a few pages, that focuses on a story of the life and times of major players

in government and the theatre of the day. Story speculates a great deal about many aspects of the “Prince Tudor” theory, and much of the tale depends upon the premise that Queen Elizabeth and Edward De Vere conceived a child together who was raised as Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton. This is one of the foundations of the book, so PT critics may want to steer clear or at least bring a reduced sensitivity regarding the subject as they read the book.

At times, these narratives may seem disjointed and unconnected. But as a whole work, they fit together into a solid narrative, dealing succinctly with the circumstances surrounding the power of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean ages. *The Shakespeare Fraud* brings together disparate elements surrounding the authorship of the dramatic works of “William Shakespeare” and weaves a fascinating and unconventional chronicle of events that seeks to explain this storyline and the events containing this literary mystery.

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The Burbage Elegy and *The Spanish Tragedy*

by C.V. Berney

As we all know, Richard Burbage was the most famous actor of his time. He originated the leading roles in many of Shakespeare's plays. When he died, he was widely mourned, and many poets wrote elegies honoring his memory. One poem in particular—*A Funeral Elegy on the Death of the famous Actor Richard Burbage who died on Saturday in Lent the 13th March 1618*¹—has survived, although the name of its author has not. It is a long poem² (85 lines), but a few lines in particular are quoted in almost every discussion of Burbage's career:

He's gone and with him what a world are dead
Which he review'd, to be revived so.
No more young Hamlet, old Hieronimo
Kind Lear, the Grieved Moor, and more beside,
That lived in him have now forever died.

"Hamlet" and "Lear" are self-explanatory; the "Grieved Moor" is, of course, Othello. "Hieronimo" is the principal figure in *The Spanish Tragedy*, a play that was enormously popular around 1580.

Orthodox scholarship attributes *The Spanish Tragedy* to Thomas Kyd; elsewhere I have argued that it is an early work by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.³ If the academicians are correct, the author of the *Elegy* cites three roles by Shakespeare (i.e., Oxford) and one role by Kyd. But if I am right, he cites four roles by Shakespeare/Oxford.

Now there's no reason why the poet cannot cite three Shakespearean roles and one by Kyd—he could cite one by Shakespeare, one by Marlowe, one by Webster and one by Lyly if he wanted to. But a 3-to-1 ratio seems peculiar. It points up the anomalous nature of attributing the *Tragedy* to Kyd in the first place. What else did Kyd do? Academicians have given him various degrees of credit for *Soliman and Perseda*, *King Leir*, *Arden of Faversham*, *Edward III*, and, of course, the mythical *Ur-Hamlet*. All of these works have some connection to Shakespeare/Oxford.

In a recent paper⁴ I pointed out a remarkable relationship between *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet*: There is a one-to-one correspondence between the five main characters in the two plays. In addition, each character in the *Tragedy* who is of an older generation corresponds to one in *Hamlet* who is of a younger generation, and vice versa—there is a *generational inversion*. Specifically, Hieronimo (old)—Hamlet (young); Isabella (old)—Ophelia (young); Horatio (young)—King Hamlet (old); Bel-imperia (young)—Gertrude (old); and Lorenzo (young)—Claudius (old).

Thus I interpret the four lines of the *Elegy* quoted above as follows:

- (a) The anonymous author believed that all four of the roles he alluded to were by the same author. This reinforces my belief that *The Spanish Tragedy* was written by Shakespeare/Oxford.
- (b) The juxtaposition of "young Hamlet" and "old Hieronimo" in the same line indicates that the poet was aware that the two plays were related, and furthermore, that a *generational inversion* was one of the elements of the relationship.

I realize that these conclusions are speculative. But if speculation is outlawed, what happens to the works of Stephen Greenblatt, James Shapiro, and Stanley Wells?

¹ 1619 by the modern calendar.

² The complete poem is included as Appendix 1 in a thesis by Kristýna Obermajerová entitled *Richard Burbage: The Life, Career and Acting Qualities of an Elizabethan Player*. The thesis can be accessed online by entering the title.

³ C. V. Berney, "Who Wrote *The Spanish Tragedy*?" *Shakespeare Matters* 4.2 (Winter 2005); "Hidden Allusions in Oxford's *Spanish Tragedy*," *Shakespeare Matters* 4.4 (Summer 2005).

⁴ C. V. Berney, "Oxford's *Spanish Tragedy*: More Hidden Allusions," *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* 51.2 (Spring 2015), 18-22.



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