



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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SOF Hires PR Director

From the Board of Trustees

by Julie Sandys Bianchi, Trustee

To increase public awareness of the Shakespeare Authorship Question and to further the recognition of the Earl of Oxford as the leading candidate for being true author of the Shakespeare canon, the SOF Board of Trustees began in 2018 to consider hiring a professional to help strengthen the public relations and marketing of our organization. The sticking point, besides the cost, was that none of us believed we could possibly find anyone with the right combination of influential connections, speaking poise and writing ability to take on our unique needs part-time—let alone find someone who professed any interest in Shakespeare authorship. So we all were thrilled to discover that among our newer SOF members there was a unicorn who would exceed our expectations; someone with not only the experience and character to serve as our spokesman, but an authentic, dyed-in-the-tawny-wool Oxfordian!

As chair of the newly expanded PR and Marketing committee of the SOF, I take pleasure in announcing that the Board of Trustees has contracted with veteran news and marketing executive Steven Sabel to undertake the role of serving as our first Director of Public Relations and Marketing. In his interview with Bob Meyers (which begins on this page), you will see he has already hit the ground running, rapidly building up our media list and working to expand our Speakers Bureau.

During the upcoming months, the SOF Board and its committees will be involved in brainstorming ways to keep Steven busy and in initiating fundraising projects to help pay for our goals. Our new Director of PR and Marketing will not be responsible for creating original Oxfordian content on his own, but will work with us to help advance the visibility of our scholars. He will be depending on the entire membership to participate in the effort to promote awareness of who we are, what we've done, and what the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is working toward. If you can help with fundraising or PR activations, or would like to join the Speakers Bureau, please contact an SOF Board member or use the links embedded in the text of Steven's interview.



Q & A with Steven Sabel

[**Steven Sabel** (above) spoke with SOF member Bob Meyers for sixty-five minutes on January 11, 2019, about his priorities and what he hopes to accomplish in his first year.]

Bob Meyers: Congratulations on the new position! Please give us a sense of what we can expect.

Steve Sabel: I am very excited to fill this new role for the SOF under the direction of the Board of Trustees. The board has instructed me to help let the world

(Continued on p. 30)

From the President:

Donate to maintain and expand the new SOF Public Relations and Marketing Campaign!

What an exciting time to be an Oxfordian! Thanks to the generous donations and support of our members, the SOF has successfully ventured into a new initiative—the hiring of Steven Sabel as Director of Public Relations and Marketing, effective November 2018, and the creation of focused public relations and marketing campaign to increase awareness of the Shakespeare Authorship Question and to promote Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as the true author. The Board of Trustees is pleased to advance our organization's efforts in this way.

We are constantly ignored by the media and academia, and it is time we make an impact on them through this concentrated campaign. We also hope this endeavor will increase membership in the SOF so that we can continue to increase our financial posture to more effectively promote the true author of the works of Shakespeare.

For this reason, your financial support is now more important than ever. Help us continue to fund this effort by making a tax-deductible donation today. The new PR and Marketing Campaign will include:

- The creation and maintenance of a **database** of media outlets and media representatives
- Development of a **Media Kit** outlining the evidence showing that Oxford was the real Shakespeare
- Creating and distributing regular **press releases** about SOF activities and member accomplishments
- **Follow-up contact** with media outlets
- Creation and maintenance of a database of **contacts in academia**
- Promotion of the **SOF Speakers Bureau**
- Assistance with scheduling speaker **appearances and interviews**
- Assistance with scheduling and promoting **SOF regional events**
- Development and creation of a Membership Brochure and other **marketing material**
- Development and execution of an advanced **PR campaign for the SOF Conference** in Hartford this October.

Early efforts in the campaign have already generated success through several published media news stories, speaker engagements, and inquiries about evidence for

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship pursues its mission by supporting research, educational and scholarly initiatives, annual conferences, website and social media, and by publishing this Newsletter and 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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Articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items of interest to the Shakespeare Oxfordian community are welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. As provided in the bylaws, "The conferences, publications, and other educational projects of the Fellowship will be open forums for all aspects of the Oxfordian theory of authorship."

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Oxford as the true author. Momentum is already building, and your donations can help ensure that we sustain that momentum.

PLEASE DONATE to the PR campaign so that we can continue to get the word out!

Mail your check to:

Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship
P.O. Box 66083
Auburndale, MA 02466.

or donate online at our website:

<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/product/donations/>.

Below are a few other significant new developments that you should know about:

Podcasts

The SOF has initiated a series of “Don’t Quill the Messenger” podcasts featuring a variety of guests talking about aspects of the authorship question. These downloadable audio clips are intended to introduce the authorship topic and spur doubt about the Shakespearean education listeners received in school. Listen for yourself at: <https://www.dragonwagonradio.com/dontquillthemessenger>

Our first podcast features Bryan Wildenthal, SOF First Vice-President, and Steven Sabel. We plan to upload two podcasts a month during 2019 and already have a catalogue of seven podcasts ready for air. And look for “Don’t Quill” merchandise under the upper right menu on the podcast page.

2019 Research Grant Awards

This year’s research grants have been announced (see page 6 of this issue). The decision to provide funding for

the three proposals came as the result of a unanimous vote of the members of the Research Grant Program committee. Inaugurated in 2014, the SOFs research program is truly an extraordinary endeavor. No other organization in the world is fostering Oxfordian research.

Coordination with the De Vere Society

The SOF is also in discussion with the De Vere Society in England to coordinate our activities. We have started discussion of possible events to commemorate the 100th anniversary, in 2020, of J. Thomas Looney’s seminal book, “*Shakespeare Identified*,” in which he revealed that the true author is Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. This is the work that launched the Oxfordian movement. We are also in the initial stages of coordinating our websites so we have common links.

There is much to do and we need your help. As president, my main objective is to focus on outreach and public relations in order to increase membership and to promote Oxford as Shakespeare.

Many people do not know about the Shakespeare Authorship Question. A world of discovery awaits them.

**We’re here and we’re clear—
It had to be Edward de Vere!**

Now, let’s get the Word out!

John Hamill, President



If you haven’t done so already, please renew your membership and provide gift memberships to your friends.

From the Editor:

Authorial Identity I:

I highly recommend Louis Menand’s essay, “Faking It: Literary Hoaxes and the Ethics of Authorship,” which appeared in the December 10, 2018, issue of *The New Yorker*. In it Menand discusses the current state of literary criticism in the context of literary hoaxes. On one hand is the prevalent theory that, when reading a work of literature and trying to understand it, one can only look at the text itself; the identity of the author, or the author’s “purpose” in creating the work, are irrelevant. Menand allows that there may be an exception to such inflexibility: when the “name on the cover seriously

misleads us about the identity of the author, we can feel that we have been taken in.”

Menand cites *A Million Little Pieces*, a 2003 memoir by James Frey about his recovery from alcohol and drug dependency; it turned out that it was at least partly fabricated. But, Menand writes, there are defenses to such books: the “surrogacy defense” (that an event depicted could have happened to someone, if not to the author); the “higher-truth defense” (that readers care more to read about addiction itself than to what may or may not have happened to the author); and the “literature professor’s defense,” that “the distinction between fact and fiction, although it may appear fundamental, is a fairly recent development in the history of writing, only two or three centuries old. Along with that distinction

came the practice of putting the author's name on a book, and along with both of those came the ideology of authenticity." Literature professors felt that it was "naïve" to think one could directly connect the "text back to some fixed and knowable entity called 'the author'" and "[s]o was the idea that you could draw a straight line from the text outward to some external stuff called 'reality.'"

But recently, Menand observes, the pendulum may have begun to shift, that it may indeed be deemed relevant to factor in what we know (or don't know) about an author. He then turns to a recently published book, Christopher L. Miller's "smart and engaging study," *Impostors: Literary Hoaxes and Cultural Authenticity* (U. of Chicago, 2018). Miller is a Professor of African American Studies and French at Yale. "Miller's particular subject is literary hoaxes ... [where] the name on the cover is not that of the person who wrote the contents—the name on the cover is deliberately misleading—and the reader has no way of knowing it."

Miller classifies these into groups. Some "intercultural hoaxes" (Miller's term) came about because demand exceeded supply—for example, there were thought to be few adept Latino or Latina writers with inner city backgrounds. Into that void came the 1983 novel *Famous All Over Town*, by Danny Santiago, where the narrator purported to be a young Chicano from Los Angeles. It was a critical success. The real author was Daniel James, in his seventies and white. Another example was *Vivre Me Tue (Living Kills Me)* (1997), a first novel by Paul Smal. It was hailed as an authentic voice from the French-born Arab, or Beur, community. The real writer was Jack-Alain Léger, a white Frenchman (who had also published under other aliases).

As Professor Miller makes clear in his preface, he chose to focus on some American hoaxes and "selected French and Francophone cases." So he doesn't discuss what we regard as the greatest literary hoax of all—the publication, between 1593 and 1623, of a huge body of erudite work attributed to a glover's son from rural England who is not known to have attended school and left behind in his own hand only six scrawled signatures. Yes, William Shakespeare. In Louis Menand's words, "the name on the cover is deliberately misleading."

In most of the hoaxes analyzed by Christopher Miller, the author uses a pseudonym. Miller does discuss a twentieth century literary hoax that has some parallels to the Shakspeare/Oxford situation: the 1954 novel *The Radiance of the King* by Camara Laye, a Guinean writer. It was well received as an authentic

voice of the new Africa. Miller believes the work was actually written by Francis Soulié, a Belgian and former Nazi collaborator, and that Laye was persuaded to put his name on it. The similarities are that the true author used the name of another living person (with the latter's acquiescence), and that the true author had good reasons to hide his identity. The differences, of course, are that the purported author (Laye) was himself an established writer and the work was intended to reflect his cultural background rather than the true author's life experiences.

What can we make of all this? Perhaps nothing, except that literary cover-ups of one kind or another have existed for as long as we've had literature. In his *New Yorker* essay, Menand closed thoughtfully: "does it really matter? The old literature-professor response was that authorship, like identity, is a construction, and so it doesn't. The response of what Miller calls 'the new identitarians' is that we should not accept representations of experiences that the author could not have known, and so it does. Both arguments are provocations. They should get us thinking about what we mean by things like authenticity and identity. What they should not do is prevent us from reading."

Let's hope that "the new identitarians" may be brave enough to re-examine the Shakespeare canon in its full context—historical, political, religious, educational and cultural—and question whether they've got the right author.

Authorial Identity II:

We can now say that the Shakespeare Authorship Question was discussed on the campus of Harvard University! One of my college roommates, Bob Heckart, is a Visiting Fellow there, and is affiliated with Harvard's Adams House (one of the university's residence halls) for meals and social activities. On Tuesdays, his group has a weekly lunch with a guest speaker. Bob arranged for me to speak on October 24. I gave an abridged version of my PowerPoint authorship presentation, "Who Was Shakespeare?" to an audience of about two dozen, which included administrators, faculty and students. The presentation was well received, and there were some good questions. Afterward, Bob told me that he'd been informed that someone from the English Department had attended. Whoever it may have been, I'm pleased to report they were well behaved—no exasperated sighs, no storming out of the room, no thrown food. Bob also reported that they may want me back.

Alex McNeil, editor

Letter:

Having been a lapsed Oxfordian since at least 1996 (whilst hosting an inventor from England of the same persuasion in my law office—his offering was the “Flipstick,” a combination umbrella/portable seat of sorts for the moveable feasting of the various Olympic outdoor events centered in Atlanta, Georgia) I have nonetheless always been puzzled by the posh accent automatically associated with performed Shakespearean works.

Recently, I have become enamored with the sublime and pragmatic work of the Crystals (David and Ben Crystal, the father-and-son team who’ve written four books, including *Shakespeare’s Words: A Glossary and Language Companion*); indeed, Ben and I have had correspondence concerning his involvement in my ongoing attempts at employing rap/hip-hop cadences in some derivative works I’ve penned for The American Shakespeare Center’s Blackfriars Playhouse in Virginia. It was then that, although his schedule wouldn’t allow same, he generously referred me to resources apropos Hip Hop Shakespeare in the UK as well as MCLars, the Stanford Literature graduate with whom I may collaborate based upon MC’s gracious reception of my work “A Virulent Strain,” a time-jumping romp in which Falstaff feigns his rejection by Hal once Hal becomes Henry V as a quest unto America where he was charged with the “fall” of an apparent “staff” infection of the 21st century body politic of the once Colonies by Henry IV. Needless to say, the jovial premise has to do with Sir John’s failure to understand Roman numerals—a comedy of errors ensues when he, with some help from Judah Benjamin and Herman Melville, et al., seeks to counsel President Lyman Gettisberg in a play within, “Gettisberg, Addressed,” via the bedroom ghost of Abraham Lincoln with whom he becomes enamored as a Lincolnshire bagpipe salesman of sorts.

But I digressed. My concern is this, put to all the many scholars of Oxfordian bent: does the powerful logic of O.P. (Original Pronunciation) in any way denigrate the proposition that the aristocratic 17th Earl was indeed the author? Surely he was keenly aware of the predominant groundling audience’s illiterate eyes and tongues and the need (perhaps wish, as well) to disguise his erudition further by way of both extant pronunciation of a language still in flux as to spelling and/or connotation and the practical theatrical need to “give ’em what they want,” in particular, the bawdiness inherent in their quotidian lives.

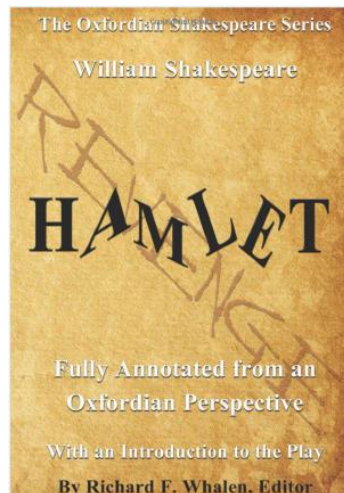
While I cannot imagine that he could not so tailor his works, I feel the need for company in this matter.

Certainly timeless poetic practice since Homer right through to today would seem to affirm my diagnosis of “no harm, though foul.” I recall Steven Dietz, the most produced playwright in America, teaching us to “write for the ear” at the Kennedy Center Playwriting Intensives I was lucky enough to have been invited to attend in 2006.

Yours in Oxfordianism,
Joseph Baron-Pravda, J.D.
<http://www.jbpravda.com>

Advertisement

Ever wonder what an Oxfordian edition of a Shakespeare play would look like?



Try the Oxfordian edition of *Hamlet* (2018), a play that the Stratfordians call “enigmatic” and “problematic,” but which makes perfect sense and wonderful entertainment when read with the understanding that it was written by the Earl of Oxford.

Edited by Richard F. Whalen with Jack Shuttleworth, chairman emeritus of the English

department at the U.S. Air Force Academy, *Hamlet* is the latest of four plays so far in the Oxfordian Shakespeare Series, following the second edition of *Macbeth*, also edited by Whalen, general editor and publisher of the series; *Othello*, edited by Ren Draya of Blackburn University and by Whalen; and *Anthony and Cleopatra*, edited by Michael Delahoyde of Washington State University.

All four plays are available at Amazon.com.

What's the News?

2019 SOF Research Grant Awards

The board of trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship has announced the awarding of research grant funding to three worthy applications this year, for a total of \$20,000. Grants have been awarded to:



Michael Delahoyde and Coleen Moriarty, who will receive \$12,000 toward their

continued research in the Italian archives for details regarding the travels of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. Michael Delahoyde is a clinical professor of English at Washington State University, and Coleen Moriarty is an independent researcher. The two have been collaborating for forty years on theatrical, musical, and other projects, most recently at the California Shakespeare Theater (Cal Shakes). For the past four years, through the support of the SOF Research Grant Program, they have been poring over archives in northern Italy for the purposes of uncovering further details about the travels of the Earl of Oxford, circa 1575.



James A. Warren, who will receive \$4,000 to aid in his quest to inventory and preserve

Oxfordian records, correspondence, and publications from the first decades of the Oxfordian era. Warren was a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of State for more than twenty years, serving in public diplomacy positions at American embassies in eight countries, mostly in Asia. Warren's project will involve preparing a detailed inventory of the Oxfordian materials stored in the Special Collections Room in the library at Brunel University in London, consisting of three parts: the archives of the Shakespearean Authorship Trust, which includes the archives of the Shakespeare Fellowship founded in 1922; the archives of the De Vere Society; and the Edward Holmes Archives.



Rima Greenhill, who will receive \$4,000 to conduct Oxfordian research in the Russian State

Archives in Moscow, which contain documents pertaining to the Russian-English exchange during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. Greenhill is a senior lecturer in Russian language in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Stanford University. Greenhill will travel to Moscow to examine the Russian State Archives records of correspondence and documents relating to the 16th and early 17th century exchange between England

and Russia, in the hope of finding direct references to Shakespeare.

The three awards this year provide funding for research in three locations that have not been investigated before in this way—Italy, England and Russia. As a condition of their grant, each recipient will prepare a full report and accounting of their research activities, successes, and findings. Grant recipients will also be invited to provide a report to the SOF membership at the Annual Conference in Hartford, Connecticut, in October.

Nothing Is Truer Than Truth Available on DVD and Streaming Services

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, director of the Oxfordian documentary film *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*, has announced that the film will be available in several formats in mid-February 2019. Her company, Controversy Films, has signed a deal with Gravititas Ventures, a global entertainment distribution company

Controversy Films presents

NOTHING IS TRUER THAN TRUTH

Every author's life tells a story: Edward de Vere is Shakespeare

Featuring Derek JACOBI Mark RYLANCE Diane PAULUS Tina PACKER
Written, Directed & Produced By Cheryl EAGAN-DONOVAN
Co-Produced By Stephen T. MAING Meredith CROWLEY Zimo HUANG
Edited By Zimo HUANG Trina RODRIGUEZ Rachel RINKESMITH
Cinematography By Stephen T. MAING Paul SHARPE Mike PATERSON
Based on the Book 'SHAKESPEARE' BY ANOTHER NAME By Mark ANDERSON
Narrated By Gregory Paul MARTIN Music By Katy JARZEBOWSKI

2018 OFFICIAL SELECTION
IFFBOSTON
INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL BOSTON

that connects filmmakers and producers with consumers through hundreds of media platforms, to distribute the film.

“We are very excited about working with the team at Gravitas to bring *Nothing Is Truer than Truth* to new audiences!” said Eagan-Donovan. “We are extremely grateful to the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship and its members for their generous support of the project. We hope that members will share the pre-order link on all of their social media and review the film on the iTunes page because this will strengthen and expand our broadcast options.”

Nothing Is Truer Than Truth is scheduled to be available on February 12 of this year (a few days after this issue goes to press). It will be released on iTunes and many other platforms, including Comcast, Verizon, and Dish Network in the U.S., Shaw and EastLink TV in Canada, as well as Google Play, YouTube, Amazon Prime, Microsoft, and Vimeo. *Nothing Is Truer than Truth* will also be released on DVD and Blu-ray, and will be available from retailers such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Best Buy, Target, and Walmart, and at public libraries across the U.S. and Canada.

Eagan-Donovan has scheduled a screening and reception at Anthology Film Archives in New York City on Saturday, February 9, to celebrate the release. She will also screen the film at Southern Oregon University in Ashland on March 29, where she will be joined by Earl Showerman for the Q&A, and at the annual De Vere Society Meeting in London on April 27.

At press time the film was available to order for download at Apple iTunes: <https://apple.co/2A9zRI4>.

Mark Rylance Slams SBT in Foreword to New Book

In a foreword to a new book that advocates Francis Bacon as a major contributor to the Shakespeare canon, prominent authorship doubter (and SOF Honorary Trustee) Mark Rylance takes the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to task, accusing the SBT of “fearmongering.”

As reported in *The Guardian* on January 19, 2019, (<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2019/jan/19/mark-rylance-takes-on-shakespeare-establishment-in-authorship-debate-over-francis-bacon>) Rylance wrote: “Time will celebrate those who were not daunted by the fearmongering of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and its supporters in the media and academia. . . . The Stratfordian response to our question about the authorship has usually been to lampoon the questioner. They can’t answer the question or make it go away, so they try to make us go away.”

The book in question is *Francis Bacon’s Contribution to Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method*, by Barry Clarke (Routledge, 310 pp., published in late

January 2019). According to the publisher, “it advocates a paradigm shift away from a single-author theory of the Shakespeare work towards a many-hands theory. Here, the middle ground is adopted between competing so-called Stratfordian and alternative single-author conspiracy theories. In the process, arguments are advanced as to why Shakespeare’s First Folio (1623) presents as an unreliable document for attribution, and why contemporary opinion characterised Shakespeare [his baptised name] as an opportunist businessman who acquired the work of others. Current methods of authorship attribution are critiqued, and an entirely new Rare Collocation Profiling (RCP) method is introduced which, unlike current stylometric methods, is capable of detecting multiple contributors to a text.

“Using the Early English Books Online database, rare phrases and collocations in a target text are identified together with the authors who used them. This allows a DNA-type profile to be constructed for the possible contributors to a text that also takes into account direction of influence. The method brings powerful new evidence to bear on crucial questions such as the author of the *Groats-worth of Witte* (1592) letter, the identifiable hands in *3 Henry VI*, the extent of Francis Bacon’s contribution to *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*, and the scheduling of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* at the 1594–5 Gray’s Inn Christmas revels for which Bacon wrote entertainments.

“The treatise also provides detailed analyses of the nature of the complaint against Shakespeare in the *Groats-worth* letter, the identity of the players who performed *The Comedy of Errors* at Gray’s Inn in 1594, and the reasons why Shakespeare could not have had access to Virginia colony information that appears in *The Tempest*.” It is available from the publisher for \$140 (hardcover), \$33.95 (paper), and \$24.98 (eBook). Clarke has a Ph.D. in Shakespeare studies, and is also a crossword puzzle compiler.

The *Guardian* article makes mention near the end of the SBT’s 2013 book, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt: Evidence, Argument, Controversy*, in which (at least according to *The Guardian*), “experts on Bacon, Oxford and Marlowe were among Shakespeareans who explained in a series of essays why only Shakespeare could have written his plays and poems, apart from his collaborations.” The article closed with a brief quote from SBT’s Head of Knowledge Paul Edmondson.

Online Professional Journal Devotes 87 Pages to Shakespeare Authorship Question

In the Summer 2018 issue of the *Newsletter* we reported that *Critical Stages*, a web-based journal for the professional theatre community, would be devoting part

of its next issue to the authorship question. That issue has now been published, and is publicly available online.

The new Issue 18 of *Critical Stages* contains an 87-page section devoted to the Shakespeare Authorship Question. Inclusion of the topic is due to the efforts of SOF Trustee Don Rubin, who is the managing editor of *Critical Stages* and served as the section editor. “I tried to make [it] somewhat objective, but there is no doubt that the section has a clear Oxfordian bias,” Rubin said. “So enjoy.” Rubin is Professor Emeritus at Toronto’s York University and is one of the few professors in the world who has taught courses on the authorship question on a regular basis. He is the founder of the quarterly scholarly journal *Canadian Theatre Review* and series editor of Routledge’s six-volume *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*,

The special section includes theatre-focused material from Sir Mark Rylance and Sir Derek Jacobi (two pieces, including a previously unpublished BBC interview), actor Keir Cutler, author Hank Whittemore, Gary Goldstein (editor of *The Oxfordian*), author Diana Price and attorney (and former SOF President) Tom Regnier, with an introductory essay by Rubin. It also includes an essay in French by Michel Vaïs (Secretary-General of the International Association of Theatre Critics) about his search for the true author, whom he believes is John Florio.

Critical Stages is the journal of the UNESCO-linked International Association of Theatre Critics (based in Paris), with an editorial office at Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece, and twin publishers in the US (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) and China (Beijing’s Jin Xing Dance Company). The journal gets 10,000 to 20,000 hits per month.

Critical Stages is freely available online. To access the special section (“The Question That Won’t Go Away”), please use the following link: “[Special Topics II: The Question That Won’t Go Away.](#)”

The VR Bard: *Hamlet 360: Thy Father’s Spirit*

Now you can really get inside *Hamlet*. Steven Maler of the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company in Boston has directed a virtual reality (VR) video abridgement of the play, *Hamlet 360: Thy Father’s Spirit*, which is available for free online.

In a page one story in the *Boston Globe* on January 25, drama critic Don Aucoin raved about the experience. Donning a VR headset, he turned to watch “Gertrude stagger[] past me and out of my sight. I whirl around to follow her as she traverses a wide circle before collapsing, dead, on the floor. All Shakesperean hell is breaking loose, and I’m right there in the middle of the action.” Later he wrote: “[T]he word ‘watching’ is not quite adequate to convey this particular experience. It felt more as if I’d been catapulted into a movie or a play, or as if I was seeing it in my mind’s eye, to borrow a phrase. . . . VR is about as immersive as it gets.”

The production was filmed with a cast of thirteen on a budget of about \$500,000. Some funding was provided by Google. For distribution, Maler partnered with Boston’s public television station, WGBH, which has put the feature on its website: <https://www.wgbh.org/hamlet360>. WGBH advises that this version is best experienced with a VR headset, or by using a smartphone with a VR viewing device such as Google Cardboard or Daydream View. For those without such equipment, the feature is also available on WGBH’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChfkkICUjjk-dKZEMPWIIjA>.

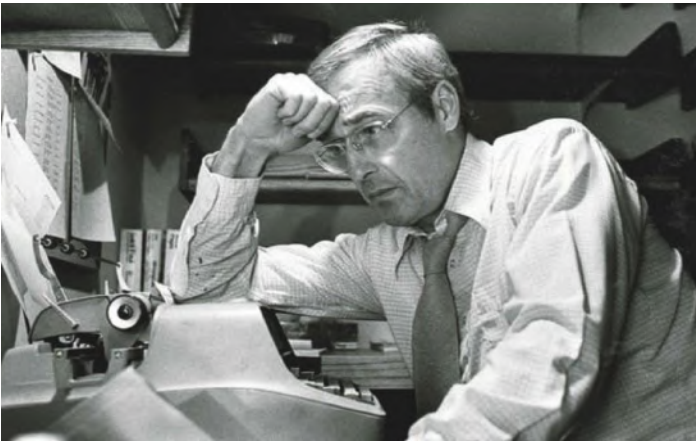
On the latter platform, the viewer can move the image around, but the experience is not as “immersive” as it would be with a headset.

Clocking in at sixty-one minutes, *Hamlet 360* is far from a full-length adaptation of the play. But, as director Maler noted, he believes it “is one of the longest VR narratives yet devised.”



Hamlet 360: To bathe or not to bathe?

In Memoriam: Al Austin (1934-2018)



Alan “Al” Austin, who wrote the seminal documentary “The Shakespeare Mystery” for PBS’s *Frontline*, died in a Phoenix, Arizona, hospice on March 29, 2018. He had been diagnosed with terminal cancer less than two weeks earlier.

After a stint as a laborer at an oil factory in Kansas, Austin attended college and served in the military. He was a disc jockey at an Iowa radio station before joining the news department of WCCO-TV in Minneapolis/St. Paul in 1983 as a general assignment reporter. There he co-founded the station’s first investigative reporting team—the I Team—which produced in-depth investigative

stories than ran four times a year. One of his colleagues recalled, “Chambers of Commerce like to talk about how professional sports teams and Fortune 500 companies make a city great, but often omit how fearless reporting—holding public officials and private citizens accountable—moves a community to take stock of itself. For twenty years, Al Austin made the Twin Cities a better place to live.”

Austin also wrote, produced or narrated nine documentaries that were broadcast nationally on PBS, including “The Shakespeare Mystery.”

For many of us, it was this telecast that introduced us to the authorship question, prompted us to examine it further, and become convinced of the case for Edward de Vere as the true Shakespeare.

Although “The Shakespeare Mystery” first aired on *Frontline* in April 1989, work on it had begun two years earlier. The documentary included footage from the 1987 authorship moot court held before three U.S. Supreme Court justices at American University in Washington, D.C., as well as extensive interviews with Charlton Ogburn (whose influential book, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, had been published in 1984) and noted Stratfordians A. L. Rowse and Samuel Schoenbaum.

During the course of his career Austin won ten prestigious national awards, including Peabody, Emmy, DuPont-Columbia Silver Baton, and Edward R. Murrow awards.

At the 2012 Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, Austin received a Vero Nihil Verius award for distinguished achievement in the Shakespeare Arts. He also spoke at the conference, discussing his recently published second novel, *The Cottage*, in which a man whose fiancée has disappeared finds himself in the middle of the authorship debate. Austin admitted that he had not intended his novel to be about Shakespeare, but that the Bard simply “took over the material.” He delighted the audience by reading excerpts from *The Cottage*, some of which were laced with details that paralleled what had gone on behind the scenes during the production of “The Shakespeare Mystery” two dozen years earlier.



Dan Wright presents award to Al Austin at Concordia University in 2012

In Memoriam: Paul Streitz (1943-2018)



Longtime Oxfordian Paul Streitz passed away on Christmas Day 2018 at age 75, after an eight-month battle with leukemia. He is best known among Oxfordians for his 2001 book, *Oxford, Son of Queen Elizabeth I*, in which he argued that Edward de Vere was both the biological son and lover of Elizabeth, and that their son was raised as Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton. More recently, he was working on a play, *Oxford and the Courtesan*, which had a staged reading in New York City.

Born in upstate New York, Streitz graduated from Hamilton College. After serving with the 82nd Infantry Division in Vietnam, he earned an MBA from the University of Chicago. From 1971 to 2008 he worked mainly in advertising and marketing in New York City.

Streitz had many interests besides the authorship question. He wrote two other books, *The Great American College Tuition Rip-Off* (2005) and *America First: Why Americans Must End Free Trade, Stop Outsourcing and Close Our Open Borders* (2006). A harsh critic of American immigration policies, he was a candidate for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in Connecticut in 2004 and 2006. He was co-author of two musicals, *OH, JOHNNY* (which had an off-off-Broadway run in 1981) and *Madison Avenue, the Subliminal Musical*. In 2013 he invented the “AEIOU Keyboard,” in which the keys were arranged “in a logical pattern,” which he touted as “the first improvement since the creation of the QWERTY keyboard in 1878.”

In addition to believing that Oxford was the son of Elizabeth, and thus was born in 1548, not 1550, Streitz also argued that Oxford did not die in 1604, but rather lived on, largely in seclusion, and was the principal reviser of what came to be known as the King James Version of the Bible, published in 1611 (see his article,

“Oxford and the King James Bible,” *Shakespeare Matters*, Spring 2011 issue).

Streitz described his 2014 play, *Shakespeare and the Courtesan* (also published as *Shakespeare in Italy: The Bard's Forbidden Love*), as a work of “historical fiction” in which Oxford meets Venetian courtesan Veronica Franco. “The play was surrealistic in the sense it had no straight linear development. Rather, the story line might be interrupted with flashbacks, futuristic scenes and scenes that show the relationship between Oxford’s travels in Italy and their influence on him as the writer ‘William Shakespeare’ and his plays.”

Paul Streitz is survived by a daughter. It is expected that he will have a military memorial service with honors sometime in May 2019.

Loretta Breuning Goes Oxfordian on *Psychology Today* Website

In late November, the SOF’s popular online series, “How I Became an Oxfordian,” featured Loretta Breuning’s story. Breuning is a professor emerita of management at California State University East Bay. Her area of interest is the human brain and brain chemistry; she is the author of a book, *Habits of Happy Brain*.

A few days later, Breuning posted a longer version of her article on PsychologyToday.com, the website of the well-known magazine. In “Shakespeare’s True Identity Helped Me Understand Myself: Discovering the Real Person behind the ‘Shakespeare’ Alias Brings Joy & Peace,” Breuning wrote that she got into the authorship question after listening to an audiobook by James Shapiro. Her natural skepticism then led her to Mark Anderson’s book *Shakespeare By Another Name*, “and it changed my world.” She continued: “Every brain filters information in order to interpret the sensory overload. Other people’s filters are easy to notice but it’s hard to see our own. We think we are just seeing the truth. But we can learn to try on different lenses, and it makes life more fun.”

Breuning went on to provide a brief biography of Oxford, and included links to the SOF and De Vere Society websites.

Predictably, her article generated a few comments, two of which appear to be by someone who is a supporter of Francis Bacon as the true Bard.

To read Breuning’s article, use this link: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/your-neurochemical-self/201811/shakespeare-s-true-identity-helped-me-understand-myself>.

Engaging Academics and Theatre Professionals

by Gary Goldstein

Since the Shakespeare authorship issue is an intellectual pursuit, Oxfordians need to engage professors in the English, Theatre and History Departments to advance the case for Edward de Vere as Shakespeare in the academic community. On the one hand, we have failed to break a quarantine on Oxfordian research by English professors, who refuse to teach the subject, or allow papers to be published in their peer-reviewed journals, or even allow presenters to speak on Oxfordian scholarship at academic conferences. Furthermore, professors of history have refused to delve into the subject at all.

On the other hand, we have found a receptive spirit among university librarians, who have stocked many Oxfordian books over the past generation. The World Catalog of Libraries (www.worldcat.org) shows the number of libraries that own the following Oxfordian titles:

Author and Title	# Libraries
Charlton Ogburn, Jr., <i>The Mysterious William Shakespeare</i>	710
Joseph Sobran, <i>Alias Shakespeare</i>	650
Richard Whalen, <i>Shakespeare: Who was He?</i>	600
Mark Anderson, <i>Shakespeare by Another Name</i>	540
Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, <i>This Star of England</i>	520
Warren Hope, <i>The Shakespeare Controversy</i>	440
Richard Roe, <i>The Shakespeare Guide to Italy</i>	425
J. Thomas Looney, <i>"Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere</i>	420

There is yet another component to engaging university students and instructors in the humanities about the Oxfordian hypothesis: whether Oxfordian research in the annual journal of the SOF, *The Oxfordian*, is indexed and catalogued in the relevant bibliographies, such as the World Shakespeare Bibliography, the Modern Language Association International Bibliography, and, starting this year, in ProQuest. This is vital because accessing these bibliographies is how researchers will discover what Oxfordian evidence is available and how to retrieve it.

The World Shakespeare Bibliography is maintained by Texas A&M for the Folger Shakespeare Library; the Modern Language Association performs indexing for its own bibliography, and ProQuest does likewise. The latter company now publishes the bibliography known as ABELL – the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature – and completes the trinity of scholarly databases that enable Oxfordian scholarly activity to become part of the institutional mind on a perpetual basis.

The good news is that the papers and book reviews in *The Oxfordian* are listed in the WSB and MLA bibliographies, starting with its first issue, and in ProQuest, starting with volume 12. WSB and MLA index the SOF's *Brief Chronicles* journal; WSB indexes the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* as well. For more than a decade, *The Oxfordian* has been offered to academics by the library distribution service known as EBSCO. Some 600 libraries today offer *The Oxfordian*, most in the electronic edition.

Since theater is where Shakespeare will continue to flourish or perish, as theatrical productions make the language of Shakespeare come alive for audiences, engaging theatre professionals is where a major breakthrough may occur. Showing actors, directors and dramaturgs how a different Shakespeare can transform productions of the plays may be the best way to demonstrate the relevance of the authorship to modern scholars and audiences.

In that regard, for the first time, the Oxfordian case is being presented to the theatre community in Issue 18 of the semiannual journal *Critical Stages*, the publication of the International Association of Theatre Critics (see article, page 7).

Oxfordians with contacts in the theatre community, whether at the commercial or university level, are encouraged to promote this unique opportunity for educational outreach.

Rosalind Barber Article Published in Notes and Queries

Among the items published in *Notes and Queries*, vol. 65, issue 4 (December 2018), was one by authorship doubter Rosalind Barber. In "Shakespeare and Warwickshire Dialect Claims," Barber demonstrated the falsity of claims that Shakespeare used Warwickshire words and phrases. According to the abstract, Barber showed that "[s]earches of digitized texts on *Early English Books Online* reveal that most of the words and phrases claimed as Warwickshire dialect were used by Elizabethan and Jacobean writers with no connection to Warwickshire and published in books Shakespeare was likely to have read. The second largest group of words can be characterized as false claims; they either do not appear in the quarto and folio texts (*redcoat*), or are typographical errors and editorial amendments (*hadeland*, *mobbled*, *batlet*). . . ."

Barber had previously explored this topic in a longer article, "Shakespeare and Warwickshire Dialect," published in the *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, vol. 5 (2016), as was reported in the Spring 2016 issue of the *Newsletter*.

SOF Summer Seminar

Ashland, Oregon – July 22-25, 2019

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) is producing *As You Like It*, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Macbeth* in the 2019 season. The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship (SOF) will sponsor a summer seminar in Ashland this July focused on these plays, as well as on recent Oxfordian publications. It will take place at Hannon Library on the campus of Southern Oregon University, where we convened in 2016 and 2018.

Coppin State University Professor Roger Stritmatter will serve as the lead seminar instructor. Other presenters will include Bonner Cutting, author of *Necessary Mischief* (see review, page 26), Steven Sabel, Producing Artistic Director of the Archway Theatre Company (and Director of Public Relations and Marketing for the SOF; see page 1), Professor Bryan Wildenthal, and Dr. Earl Showerman. Daily sessions will be held at Hannon Library between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM from Tuesday, July 23, through Thursday, July 25, with lunches included at a restaurant less than two blocks from the library.

Tuition will be \$150 for the three-day program. The seminar will be preceded by a free-to-the-public presentation by SOF faculty on Monday, July 22, followed by a reception for seminar participants that evening. While a block of theatre tickets has been reserved for the seminar faculty, registrants will be responsible for ordering their own theatre tickets for *AYLI* (July 23), *AWTEW* (July 24) and/or *Macbeth* (July 25). Tickets may be ordered by calling the OSF Box Office at 800-219-8161 or online at: <https://www.osfashland.org/en/tickets-and-calendar/ticket-pricing-and-policies.aspx>

For seminar attendees who will require accommodations in Ashland, there are numerous hotels and bed and breakfast establishments, but availability in July may be limited. The inn nearest to Hannon Library is the Flagship Inn, where rooms may be reserved for under \$100 per night. See <https://www.reservations.com/hotel/flagship-inn-of-ashland?rc-ar=07-22-2019&rc-de=07-26-2019&rc-ro=1&rc-lo=Ashland&rc-ppid=0&rc-rm=1#overview>. Assistance in transfers to and from Hannon Library and OSF will be provided by the seminar organizers. Registration is available on the SOF website here: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/product/registration-summer-seminar-2019/>. For further information on the seminar, accommodations, or other questions, contact Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net.



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Announcing the Launching of VERITAS PUBLICATIONS *Bringing Hidden Truths to Light*

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James A. Warren

An Index to Oxfordian Publications: Including Oxfordian Books and Selected Articles from non-Oxfordian Publications

Fifth Edition (September 2019)

James A. Warren

John Thomas Looney and "Shakespeare" Identified: The 100th Anniversary of the Book that is Revolutionizing Shakespeare Studies

(January 2020)

In Progress

Girolamo Cardano

Cardanus Comforte, Translated into English and published by commandment of the Right Honourable the Earle of Oxenforde (1576)

Modern Edition prepared by J. Warren

Percy Allen

The Life-Story of Edward de Vere as "William Shakespeare"

Modern Edition introduced and annotated by J. Warren

James A. Warren

Some Kind of Friends: A Novel

Dorothy Ogburn

Elizabeth and Shakespeare: England's Power and Glory

Introduced and annotated by J. Warren

Sold through [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

SOF Annual Conference: Register Now!

As announced in the previous issue of the *Newsletter*, the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship's 2019 conference will take place at the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford, Connecticut, October 17-20. Mark Twain lived for seventeen years in the house that now bears his name. It is where he wrote *Huckleberry Finn*, *Tom Sawyer*, and *The Prince and the Pauper*, among other great works. Mark Twain's importance to the Shakespeare authorship controversy cannot be questioned, as he is perhaps the most prominent writer to doubt openly that William Shakspeare of Stratford was the author of the works of "William Shakespeare."

The conference will take place in the 175-seat auditorium in the modern Mark Twain Museum, located next to the Mark Twain House. It officially gets underway on Thursday afternoon, October 17. On Saturday evening, October 19, our attendees and the public will be invited to actor (and authorship doubter) Keir Cutler's one-man show based on Twain's *Is Shakespeare Dead?*

We have reserved a block of rooms at the Homewood Suites Hotel by Hilton (338 Asylum Street, Hartford) for conference attendees. The SOF will provide shuttle service between the hotel and the Mark Twain Museum. **RESERVE NOW!** Conference attendees in recent years know how difficult it is to get rooms at conference rates when they don't book **early**.

We have a special group rate of \$149 a night (plus 15% tax) and rooms are available at that rate from Wednesday, October 16, through Sunday, October 20, so come early and stay late if you wish! Regular rates for those dates would start around \$300 per night. Do **not** reserve through the hotel website's home page, but use this [special link](#) for SOF conference attendees. You will need to provide a credit card number to reserve a room, but your credit card will not be charged at this time. Free hot breakfast buffet and free wi-fi are included. The hotel charges \$16 per day for parking.

The Conference program is being put together, and will be announced later (see "Call for Papers," at right). There will be a reception on Thursday evening, October 17. Private tours of the Mark Twain House for groups of SOF members will be offered on Saturday, October 19. The annual Awards Banquet will be on Sunday, October 20.

Registration fees have been set. You can register now, either on the SOF website (<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2019-sof-conference/>) or by using the registration form included with this issue of the *Newsletter*. For registrations **made by September 1, 2019**, the full conference fee (including reception, four meals, Mark Twain House tour and one ticket to Keir Cutler's show) is \$250 for members, \$265 for non-members. Daily rates are: \$65 for Thursday (includes reception); \$75 for Friday (includes lunch); \$100 for Saturday (includes two meals, Mark Twain House tour,

and ticket to Keir Cutler's show); \$45 for Sunday (does not include banquet). Extra banquet tickets are \$50 each, and extra tickets to Keir Cutler's show are \$20 each.

See you in October!

Call for Papers: SOF Annual Conference

The Program Committee of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship invites proposals for papers to be presented at our annual conference at the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford, Connecticut, October 17-20, 2019. The First Call deadline for paper proposals is June 1. Final Call submissions are due August 1.

Paper proposals should be 100-300 words in length and may be sent to Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net. Proposals addressing topics that are listed below will be given preference:

- Mark Twain and the Shakespeare Authorship Question.
- Legitimization of the SAQ in academia, in secondary education, and with the media.
- Deficiencies in the traditional attribution of authorship, with a focus on the abundance of erudition and rare sources manifest in the Shakespeare canon such as Shakespeare's familiarity with Italy; his proficiency in Latin, Greek, Italian, French, and Spanish languages; his knowledge of music, law, history, medicine, military and nautical terms, etc.
- Revelations of Oxford's life (or another candidate's life) that support his authorship of the Shakespeare canon, including new documentary discoveries, new interpretation of documents or literary works that affect authorship, Shakespeare characters that relate to Oxford's biography (e.g., William Cecil/Polonius in *Hamlet*), new facts on Oxford's travel, education, books, and connections, or new evidence for dating of a play or poem.
- Historical information relevant to the SAQ and/or people of the era with literary, theatrical, political or social relevance to the Shakespeare canon, Oxford, or Shakspeare of Stratford (e.g., Jonson, Southampton, Essex).

Presentations customarily should be designed to be delivered in thirty to forty-five minutes, including time for questions and answers. Proposals submitted by members of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, De Vere Society, or other Shakespeare-related educational institutions will be given special consideration in selecting conference papers.

In 2018, the SOF Conference included a debate on the identity of the Dark Lady of Shakespeare's Sonnets. The Program Committee is open to scheduling another debate in 2019 and welcomes proposals that include the subject to be debated and the parties who have agreed to participate.



SHAKESPEARE OXFORD FELLOWSHIP

2019 Conference Registration (Hartford, Connecticut)

Full conference registration, October 17-20 (includes all conference presentations, three lunches, one dinner, Keir Cutler performance, and tour of Mark Twain House).

Register by Sept. 1 to save on registration fee!

Qty.

SOF members:

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

If postmarked on or before Sept. 1, 2019:

\$250 x _____ = _____

If postmarked after Sept. 1, 2019:

\$270 x _____ = _____

Non-members:

If postmarked on or before Sept. 1, 2019:

\$265 x _____ = _____

If postmarked after Sept. 1, 2019:

\$285 x _____ = _____

For those attending only specific conference days:

Thursday (includes reception)

\$65 x _____ = _____

Friday (includes lunch and coffees)

\$75 x _____ = _____

Saturday (includes 2 meals, Cutler show ticket, and house tour)

\$100 x _____ = _____

Sunday (without closing banquet)

\$45 x _____ = _____

Sunday banquet luncheon only:

\$50 x _____ = _____

Extra tickets to Keir Cutler's performance:

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Mail this form with your check or credit card information to:

Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466

To make reservations at the Homewood Suites by Hilton, call 860-524-0223 and mention the SOF Conference. Or go to the SOF website and click on "Conference," then click on "Registration" in the drop-down menu and look under "Lodging."

James Warren to Publish New Collection of Looney's Writings

[Note: James Warren, who was awarded a Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grant in late 2018 (see page 6 of this issue), plans to publish a book, *"Shakespeare" Revealed: The Collected Articles and Published Letters of J. Thomas Looney*. Below is his Introduction to that book.]

Editor James A. Warren's Introduction

Although best known for *"Shakespeare" Identified*, the book in which he introduced, in 1920, the idea that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the pen behind the pseudonym "William Shakespeare," J. Thomas Looney also wrote dozens of shorter pieces—fifty-three, all told¹—on the Oxfordian claim. Only a handful of these pieces have ever been reprinted, and, in fact, only eleven of them were even known of as late as the middle of 2017. This book brings all of them—articles and published letters, "old" and newly-discovered—together for the first time.

For at least several decades, until the middle of 2017, Looney was widely believed to have written fewer than a dozen shorter pieces on the authorship question after the publication of *"Shakespeare" Identified* in 1920 and his edition of *The Poems of Edward de Vere* a year later. Only two of those shorter pieces dated from the years just after his books were published; both came out in 1922. The others did not appear until 1935 or later—after a gap of more than thirteen years.

Given that publication record, and given Looney's own statements that the Shakespeare authorship question was not the most important issue facing mankind and that after several years of intense work on the authorship issue he was turning his attention to those other, more important, subjects, it had long appeared that he had largely turned away from the Oxfordian movement after the publication of *"Shakespeare" Identified*. It appeared that he had done little to promote the book or to respond to reviews critical of it. It all seemed a bit disappointing.

But in the middle of 2017, in the midst of my research into Oxfordian publications in the years just after Looney introduced the idea of Edward de Vere as "Shakespeare,"² I was surprised to unearth an unknown letter by Looney responding to a review critical of *"Shakespeare" Identified*. Then I stumbled across a second, and then a third. A year later, by the late summer of 2018—after accessing not only online databases but also the extensive microfiche and print holdings in the Perkins Library at Duke University—I had found eighteen previously unknown publications by Looney. The total of his shorter pieces stood at twenty-nine, up from only eleven a year earlier. These "new" pieces included not only letters responding to reviews, but also articles in which he presented new information he had uncovered since the publication of his books. Unearthing so many pieces unknown and unread for more than ninety years had made for quite an exciting year.

In addition to those eighteen "new" pieces, I had also come across references to additional articles by Looney that I could not find full information about or the full text of in the United States, either in online databases or in libraries. So in November 2018 I traveled to London to conduct additional research at the British Library and in the Oxfordian archives in the Special Collections Room of the Library at Brunel University. That work brought to light more than twenty additional pieces by Looney, bringing to more than fifty the number of shorter pieces he wrote on the Oxfordian claim after publication of *"Shakespeare" Identified*—an increase of more than forty from the long-established total of eleven known in the middle of 2017.

With the discovery of those forty-two "new" articles and letters over the past two years it has become clear that the long-held belief that Looney had turned away from the authorship question after the publication of his book was incorrect. These newly discovered pieces reveal just how intensely Looney engaged in defending himself and his ideas from attacks in reviews of his books, and in further substantiating the validity of the Oxfordian claim—the claim that Shakespeare had indeed been Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Finding these articles and letters greatly changed my opinion of Looney. I now see that the apparently mild-mannered John Thomas Looney was a fighter—mild-mannered on the outside, perhaps, but with a spine of steel inside.

That most of the articles and letters in this collection—forty-eight out of the fifty-three—have never before been reprinted raises an interesting question or series of questions: Given the often fanatical nature of Oxfordians' devotion to the subject of Edward de Vere's authorship of "Shakespeare," how could we—yes, I'm one of them—have let forty-eight pieces written by the founder of our movement slip away? How could we have allowed his two books on the subject to remain out of print for decades? And how could we have allowed Looney's own library of books—and his papers, correspondence and media clippings—to vanish from sight after leaving his widow's, Elizabeth Looney's, hands in the late 1940s? These are important questions, but at the moment they are questions I don't know the answers to.

What I do know is that, as we approach the 100th anniversary of the publication of *"Shakespeare" Identified*, interest in Looney and his writings is increasing. More attention is being paid not just to Oxford—I use Oxford and Edward de Vere interchangeably—but to the man who discovered his authorship of "Shakespeare's" works. And I know that every year more information about Looney becomes available as academic databases expand their reach to include more of the regional publications that ran articles by him and other early Oxfordians. Much of the information about Looney's shorter publications—and

the full text of them—was not available even a few years ago, and I appear to be the first to have taken advantage of the expanded reach of the databases to search for them.

As I began my research two years ago, I had planned to include Looney's eleven shorter pieces known at that time as an appendix to a larger book I planned to write, *J. Thomas Looney and "Shakespeare" Identified: The 100th Anniversary of the Book that is Revolutionizing Shakespeare Studies*. But now, with 50+ pieces by Looney in hand, the mass is too lengthy for a mere appendix. It is large enough to stand as an entire book on its own—the book you are now reading.

It is important, I think, that this collection of Looney's shorter pieces come out as soon as possible because it serves as a companion volume to the Centenary Edition of *"Shakespeare" Identified* that I also edited and that was released in early fall 2018. Between the two books, all of Looney's known Oxfordian writings are now in print.

But publishing Looney's articles and letters as a separate volume, one coming out in advance of the larger historical study that won't be released until early in 2020, closer to the date of the hundredth anniversary of the publication of *"Shakespeare" Identified* on March 4, 2020, raises a difficult question: How much explanatory material can I include here about the publications in which the pieces appeared and the context in which they were written without unduly repeating myself when writing about the same subjects at greater length in the longer book?

What I will do in this book, in the introductions to each of its nine parts, is provide information about the publications in which Looney's pieces appeared and the context in which they were written. Then, in the longer historical study, this material will be fitted into the larger story of what happened and when in the decades just after publication of *"Shakespeare" Identified*—a story that is still being uncovered as my research continues.

Looney's Articles and Letters

Looney's shorter publications can be sorted easily into three types: letters to editors in response to reviews critical of his book, articles that contain new information, and the prefatory pieces from *The Poems of Edward de Vere*.

The timing of the pieces falls easily into five time periods—1920, 1921, 1922-1924, 1935, and 1940-1941, which I have further divided into the nine sections of this book. Also of interest are the numbers of each type of piece that Looney wrote each year and how that changed over time. Looney began by writing mostly letters to editors during the year after publication of *"Shakespeare" Identified*, and then moved into articles chronicling the results of his continuing research into the subject of Edward de Vere as Shakespeare, as shown in the following chart:

	Time Period	Letters	Articles/Columns	Other	TOTAL
Part One	1920	5	0		5
Part Two	1920	6	1	2	9
Part Three	1921	1		2	3
Part Four	1922		2		2
Part Five	1922-23	2	7		9
Part Six	1923		3		3
Part Seven	1923-24	1	12		13
Part Eight	1929, 1935		6		6
Part Nine	1940-41		3		3
TOTAL		15	34	4	53

These shorter pieces appeared in several types of publications. Two are newspapers and weekly news magazines read by the general public; a third is academic publications read by scholars. Another is publications of the Shakespeare Fellowship (SF), an organization founded soon after *"Shakespeare" Identified* was published to promote research into the Shakespeare authorship question. A fifth, the largest by far, is regular pages or columns written by the Shakespeare Fellowship that appeared in publications for the general public. A sixth is the prefatory materials from *The Poems of Edward de Vere*. The following list shows the specific publications that ran shorter pieces by Looney within each category, and the total number of pieces each ran.

Shakespeare Fellowship Regular Columns in General Publications:

<i>The Hackney Spectator</i> (1922-1924)	21
<i>Shakespeare Pictorial</i> (1929, 1935)	6

Daily Newspapers:

<i>The Yorkshire Post</i> (1920)	2
<i>The Scotsman</i> (1920)	1

Weekly/Biweekly Literary/Intellectual Magazines:

<i>The Bookman's Journal</i> (1920)	5
<i>The Freethinker</i> (biweekly) (1923)	3
<i>The Times Literary Supplement</i> (1920)	1
<i>The Spectator</i> (1920)	1
<i>The Saturday Review</i> (1920)	1
<i>The Athenaeum</i> (1920)	1

Monthly Periodicals:

<i>The Golden Hind</i> (1922)	1
<i>The National Review</i> (1922)	1

Academic Journals:

<i>Notes and Queries</i> (1920)	2
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Special Categories:

<i>SF Newsletter</i> (US) (1940-1941)	3
<i>The Poems of Edward de Vere</i> (1921)	3
<i>The Mystery of "Mr. W. H."</i>	1

Content of Looney's Articles and Letters

The more I read of Looney's interesting articles and letters, the more impressive he appears. Each of his pieces is different from all others. Like George Martin said of the Beatles, he never repeats himself. He's always on to something new—responding to yet another hostile review, or examining a known situation from an unusual angle, or sometimes even introducing new information for the first time.

Among the most provocative of these pieces are the three columns published in the *Hackney Spectator* on August 3, 14 and 24, 1923, which together form a long article titled "An Elizabethan Literary Group." In them Looney describes how "the suddenness and brilliancy of the great literary outburst of the latter half of Queen Elizabeth's reign, which had puzzled students of literature," resulted from "the active association of representatives of the intellectual movement with people educated by the refinements of the court." It was only through such "group activity," led by "the soul of the (great Elizabethan) age," Edward de Vere, that "the Shakespeare dramas could have been made to embody, as they do, the whole culture of the age." Looney was already, in 1923, miles ahead of today's academics who merely document, through computer methods such as Stylometrics, that more than one writer had a hand in a play without providing the context or story explaining how those different hands came together.

Readers will note that I have reverse-engineered more than one hundred passages from works by others that Looney included in his articles. In most cases he provided only the name of the author or the name of the book or article from which the passage had come. I have filled in the blanks, providing both author and title, and adding exact page numbers. That information is indicated in footnotes, and in a bibliography at the end of the book, so that readers can easily see where Looney got his information. It is important that these sources be known because Looney built his case for Edward de Vere's authorship not on newly discovered information, but by bringing together facts already uncovered by Stratfordians, and by viewing them, in combination, from a new vantage point that shows their true significance.

It is interesting to note that more than a few of Looney's sources in the pieces in this collection were published after "*Shakespeare Identified*" came out, showing that he continued his research and remained current in the field of Shakespeare studies even after the publication of his book.

One final question remains to be asked: Given that the world remained unaware for many decades of more than forty of J. Thomas Looney's articles and published letters, and given that those items surfaced only as a result of unrelenting effort to find them over a period of several years, might there be additional pieces by Looney not yet found? That remains a distinct possibility, and I

faced the question of whether to publish those pieces found so far or postpone publication until "all" had been found.

Given that the greatest possible effort has been made to scour online databases and print materials in the United States, in the British Library, and in the Oxfordian archives at Brunel University in London, and given that all leads have been thoroughly explored and no hints of additional articles remain to follow up on, I have decided to publish now what I believe is the full set of all of Looney's post-"*Shakespeare Identified*" writings. So here they are. I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I have enjoyed hunting for them and absorbing their contents after finding them.

¹ The number varies from 51 to 55, depending on how they are counted. I am using 53 as a simplified number to refer to all of them.

² That research was for the fourth edition of *An Index to Oxfordian Publications*, which, when published in September 2017, contained listings for more than 9,000 articles, reviews, and letters to editors of special interest to Oxfordians.

Penniless, Groatsworth, and Shakespeare

by Dennis Baron

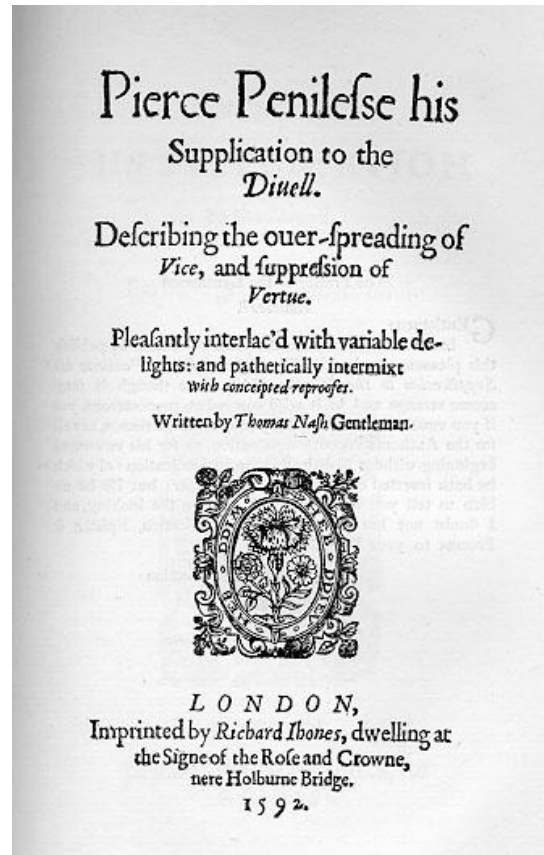
In the late summer of 1592 Thomas Nashe, a young satirist, who had come down from Cambridge four years previously, published his book *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Deuil*. The book tells the story of a writer who recognizes that men of low wit prosper whereas he, who has more wit than any of them, is living in poverty. He therefore writes a supplication to the devil in the name of Pierce Penniless.

There is a passage in it in which a malcontented, greasy son of a clothier "complaines (like a decayed Earle) of the ruine of ancient houses: whereas the Weauers loomes first framed the web of his honor," his clothes are now threadbare and he is like a "squier of low degree." "Hee will bee humorous, forsooth, and haue a broode of fashions by himself." "Sometimes (because Loue commonly weares the liuery of Wit) hee will be an Inamorato Poeta, & sonnet a whole quire of paper in praise of Lady Swin-snout, his yellow fac'd Mistres, & weare a feather of her rainbeaten fan for a fauor, like a fore-horse." "Al Italionato is his talke, & his spade peake is as sharpe as if he had been a Pioner before the walls of Roan." "If he be challenged to fight, for his delatorye excuse, hee objects that it is not the custome of the Spaniard or Germaine to looke back to euey dog that barks." "You shall see a dapper Iack, that hath been but ouer to Deepe . . . talke English through the teeth, like Iaques Scabd-hams, or Monsieur Mingo de Moustrap: when (poore slaue) he hath but dipt his bread in wilde Boares greace, and come home againe; or been bitten by the shins by a wolfe: and saith, he hath aduentured vpon

the Barricadoes of Gurney or Guingam, and fought with the yong Guise hand to hand.” In a marginal note by the side of this passage Nashe has written “The nature of an upstart.”

This is pleasing satirical humour, but in 1592 there existed an actual decayed earl who, because of his lack of financial acumen, had sold more than one hundred of his estates over the past ten or twelve years and was, financially, not much more than a squire of low degree. In his youth this earl had been a leading man of fashion who had spent extravagantly on his clothing. He was recognized as the best of the courtly poets who has “written excellently well” and, being one of the senior English Earls, rides a forehorse to the Queen in royal processions. On returning from his travels in Italy he was described by Gabriel Harvey as the “Mirror of Tuscanism.” In September of 1579 he was challenged to a duel by Philip Sidney and was twice heard to call Sidney a puppy; the Queen also advised Sidney of the difference in degree between Earls and Gentlemen and the respect inferiors owed to their superiors. Some years earlier this same Earl traveled, without permission, to the Low Countries when, after only a few days, he was brought back by Thomas Bedingfield on the orders of the Queen. One of the supporters on his crest is a blue boar. He is reported to have told the rather tall story that, after service with the Duke of Alva, a dispute between two Genoese families had escalated into a war, and that he had been chosen by the Pope to lead an army of 30,000 men to settle the dispute, which he did without having to fight a battle. He is Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford.

The “nature of an upstart” passage in *Pierce Penilesse* is a little confusing. The subject is the greasy son of a clothier, but the main body of the passage is Nashe satirizing incidents in the life of the Earl of Oxford. If the purpose of the passage is simply to satirize the Earl of Oxford, why has Nashe introduced the son of a clothier? Alternatively, if Nashe’s intention is to show how the son of a clothier could be an upstart, why has he satirized incidents in Oxford’s life when he could have invented examples? Could Nashe be implying that the son of a clothier is comparing himself to a decayed Earl and that the decayed Earl is the Earl of Oxford?



About six weeks after the publication of *Pierce Penilesse* a new book called *Greene’s Groatsworth of Wit* is published by Thomas Nashe’s friend Robert Greene.

Groatsworth relates the adventures of one Roberto who, on becoming a playwright, complains about the treatment by the London actors. Greene admits that Roberto is himself, and in warning three unnamed playwrights to beware of actors, Greene writes: “Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Iohannes factotum, is in his own conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country.”

It is noticeable that most of these lines are paraphrasing Nashe’s preface to Greene’s *Menaphon*, which was written three years earlier. In his preface Nashe writes

of “vaine glorious Tragedians, who contend not so seriously to excell in action, as to embowell the cloudes in a speech of comparison, thinking themselues more than initiated in Poets immortality, if they but once get Boreas by the beard and the heauenly Bull by the deaw-lap,” which would seem to be paraphrased as “is in his own conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country.” Nashe then writes of “Art-masters, that intrude themselues to our eares as the Alcumists of eloquence who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) thinke to out-braue better pennes with the swelling bumbast of a bragging blanke verse,” which is paraphrased as “supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse.” Nashe then goes on to criticize writers who vaunt “Ouids and Plutarchs plumes as theyr owne,” which is echoed in *Groatsworth* as “beautified with our feathers.”

The only part of the *Groatsworth* lines that does not come from Nashe’s preface of 1589 is: “Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow . . . that with his tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde.” This is a misquote of “O tygers hart wrapt in a womans hyde” from *The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth* which, in 1592, is the anonymous play *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York, and the death of Good King Henry the Sixth*.

If most of the *Groatsworth* lines are paraphrasing Nashe from three years previously, as they seem to be doing, then these lines are nothing more than an invention, a fiction, and have no significance whatever.

However, because of this paraphrasing of Nashe, and the reference to the “upstart,” the intention of the lines might have been to direct the reader to the “nature of an upstart” passage in Nashe’s *Pierce Penilesse* that was published only six weeks earlier.

In his previous writings Nashe’s definition of an upstart was someone who has received undeserved acclaim. As noted, Nashe criticizes writers who vaunt “Ouids and Plutarchs plumes as theyr owne,” which is reflected in *Groatsworth* as “beautified with our feathers.” The underlying meaning of the *Groatsworth* line is that the upstart crow is receiving undeserved acclaim by vaunting as his own the plumes of other writers.

It therefore follows logically that in *Pierce Penilesse* Nashe has used the device of satirizing real incidents in the life of the Earl of Oxford, which are connected to the son of a clothier, to show that the upstart clothier’s son is receiving the recognition that is due to the Earl of Oxford; and that in *Groatsworth* Greene has used the same device of connecting a modified version of “O tygers hart wrapt in a womans hyde” to a player, to show that the upstart player is also receiving the recognition that is due to the Earl of Oxford.

By connecting the upstart player to the upstart son of a clothier it can be seen that someone is presenting himself as the author of *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York*, but that it had actually been written by the Earl of Oxford. This interpretation is reinforced with the realization that *Groatsworth* uses the word *player*, and that a player plays the part of someone other than himself: he pretends to be someone else. Furthermore, Greene describes the player as a Crow, which implies, from a knowledge of Horace, that the player is not only an upstart, but also a thief.

It could only be clearer if the “tygers hart” line had been inserted into the “nature of an upstart” passage, or if Nashe is the author of *Groatsworth*.

By the late summer of 1592 the cat has been let out of the bag. Before the end of the year Nashe attempts to put the cat back into the bag when he denies that “the least word or sillable of *Groatsworth* “proceeded from my pen,” or that he was “priuie to the writing or printing of it.” However, it cannot be denied that Nashe’s preface to Greene’s *Menaphon* has been paraphrased, and that his “nature of an upstart” passage from *Penilesse* is connected to the upstart crow, and is reflected in the misquotation of the “tygers hart” line.

It would seem that Nashe and Greene know what is happening and have collaborated with each other so that one and one, *Penilesse* and *Groatsworth*, can be put together: Nashe characterizing the thieving upstart as the son of a clothier and Greene representing him as a player. Perhaps the player is the greasy son of a clothier. Or could it be that the thieving upstart is that drunken tinker Christopher Sly from Burton Heath in

Warwickshire who, in the Induction scenes of *The Taming of the Shrew*, wakes up to find that he is living the life of a lord?

On 27 April 1593, eight months after the publication of *Pierce Penilesse*, *Pierces Supererogation* by Gabriel Harvey is entered in the Stationers Register.

Pierces Supererogation is an almost unrelenting attack on Thomas Nashe, as exemplified by these lines from the third part of the book: “Nashe the bellweather of the scribling flocke, the swish-swash of the presse, the bumm of Impudency, the shambles of beastlines, the poulkat of Pouls churchyard, the schrich-owle of London, the toade-stoole of the Realme. . . .”

In the first part of the book Harvey takes an ironic tone: “Giue me the fellow, that is as Peerelesse, as Pennilesse; and can oppose all the libraries in Pouls Churchyard with one wonderfull work of Supererogation; such an unmatcheable peece of Learning, as no booke can counteuaille, but his owne; the onely recordes of the singularities of this age.” A work of “supererogation” is one that acts as a counterbalance against the sins of our lives. Again, four pages later: “Arte did not springe in such, as Sir Iohn Cheeke, and M. Ascham: and witt bud in such, as Sir Philip Sidney, & M. Spencer; which were but violets of March, or the primroses of May: till the one began to sprowte in M. Robarte Greene, as a sweating Impe of the euer-greene Laurell; the other to blossome in M. Pierce Pennilesse, as in the riche garden of pore Adonis: both to growe to perfection, in M. Thomas Nashe; whose prime is a haruest; whose Arte a misterie, whose witt a miracle, whose stile the onely life of the presse, and the very hart-blood of the Grape.”

Is Harvey crediting Nashe’s fictional character, Pierce Penniless, with writing a piece “in the riche garden of pore Adonis” and with a “wonderfull work of Supererogation...as no booke can counteuaille, but his owne”? Or, still being deeply ironic, is he saying that Pierce Penniless can be compared to someone else who has written in the rich garden of pure Adonis, and has also produced a wonderful work of supererogation? It would seem to be the latter, as Harvey says that Greene and Penniless grow to perfection in Thomas Nashe: “the very hart-blood of the Grape.”

Part two of *Pierces Supererogation* is a criticism of John Lyly, but in part three Harvey returns to Nashe as he informs us that Nashe has promised to have the last word in his literary argument with Harvey. However, the publication of Nashe’s last word will be postponed “onely at my instance: who can conceiue small hope of any possible account, or regard of mine own discourses, were that faire body of the sweetest Venus in Print, as it is redoubtably armed with the compleat harnessse of the bravest Minerua.”

Minerva was the Roman equivalent of the Greek

Pallas Athena, goddess of war, wisdom, intelligence, and the arts. In one hand she held a spear, and in the other a shield. Pallas probably received her name from the wielding, brandishing, or shaking of the spear, as *pallo* means to wield, brandish, or shake.

The “riche garden of pore Adonis” and “that faire body of the sweetest Venus” would seem to be *Venus and Adonis*, which is armed with the “compleat harnesse,” the shield and the shaking spear, of Minerva. Nine days before *Pierces Supererogation* was entered in the Stationers Register, *Venus and Adonis* by William Shakespeare had been entered. Harvey says that *Venus and Adonis* is not in print, but he has obviously had a preview of the narrative poem and knows that when *Venus* appears “Euery eye of capacity will see a conspicuous difference beweeene her, and other myrrours of Eloquence.” *Venus and Adonis* was published five or six weeks later, at the beginning of June 1593.

Before this Venus passage Harvey mocks Nashe with: “I looked for a treaty of pacification: or imagined thou wouldest arme thy quill, like a stowt champion, with the compleat harnesse of Witt, and Art: na, I feared the brasen shield, and the brasen bootes of Goliath, and that hideous speare, like a weauers beame: but it is onely thy fell stomacke that blustereth like a Northeren winde: alas, thy witt is as tame as a duck; thy art as fresh as sower ale in summer; thy brasen shield in thy forehead; thy brasen bootes in thy hart; thy weauers beame in thy tounge; a more terrible launce then the hideous speare, were the most of thy Power equiualent to the least of thy Spite.”

Having written that someone has used the “compleat harnesse of the bravest Minerua” when writing *Venus and Adonis*, Harvey still has the phrase in his mind when he imagines that Nashe would have called upon the “compleat harnesse of Witt and Art” in his literary arguments. The “compleat harnesse of the bravest Minerva” and “the compleat harnesse of Witt, and Art” would appear to be one and the same, as both are armed with the shield and the shaking spear. The unwitting implication of Harvey’s lines is that if Nashe could have called upon the symbolical military equipment of Minerva to make his writing an instrument of the goddess, as the author of *Venus and Adonis* has done, then the “compleat harness of the bravest Minerua,” the name Shakespeare, is a pseudonym.

Harvey also intertwines references to Minerva’s armoury with a reference to 5.1.21 of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “I fear not Goliath with a weaver’s beam” with the intention of connecting the “compleat harnesse of the bravest Minerua” to the author of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as Harvey knows that the author of *Venus and Adonis* is also the author of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Gabriel Harvey was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and in July 1578, while addressing the court of Queen Elizabeth at Audley End, he said (in Latin) of the Earl of Oxford: “Thy merit doth not creep along the ground. . . . It is a wonder which reaches as far as the heavenly orbs. . . . Mars will obey thee, Hermes will be thy messenger, Pallas striking her spear shaft will attend thee. For a long time past Phoebus Apollo has cultivated thy mind in the arts. English poetical measures have been sung by thee long enough. . . . O thou hero worthy of renown . . . now is the time to sharpen the spear. . . . Minerva strengthens thy right hand. . . . Thine eyes flash fire, thy countenance shakes spears.”

Just as in 1578 when Harvey incorporated into his tribute to de Vere the phrases “Pallas striking her spear shaft,” “sharpen the spear,” “Minerva strengthens thy right hand,” culminating with “thy countenance shakes spears,” so in *Pierces Supererogation* he uses the “compleat harnesse of Witt, and Art,” the “brasen shield” and the “hideous speare” to signify Minerva, and the “compleat harnesse of the bravest Minerua”—the shield and the shaking spear—to signify Shakespeare.

In the late summer of 1592 Thomas Nashe and Robert Greene know that someone is receiving the recognition that is due to the decayed Earl: Edward de Vere. In the spring of 1593 Gabriel Harvey knows that Edward de Vere, whose “countenance shakes spears,” is now, with the imminent publication of *Venus and Adonis*, using the “compleat harnesse of the bravest Minerua,” Shakespeare, as a pseudonym.

Harvey also knows that someone has written a wonderful work of supererogation that can only be counterbalanced by books of his own, “The onely recordes of the singularities of this age.” Perhaps, when he wrote this, Harvey was thinking of Hamlet describing the players as “the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time,” and that the wonderful work of supererogation is *Hamlet*. That play, according to Nashe in his Preface to *Menaphon*, must have been written before 1589. William Shakspeare of Stratford upon Avon was the son of the glover John Shakspeare. It is not known if he was a “greasy” son of a glover, but from what little is known about him “All malcontent” may very well be an apt description. Whether Shakspeare was a real actor or, because of his fortunate name, someone who was specifically chosen to play the part of a lifetime, is open to speculation. However, what seems to be more than likely is that in the late summer of 1592 he was the thieving upstart who filched the good name of Shakespeare from Edward de Vere.



Love's Labour's Lost: Who Is Jaquenetta?

by C. V. Berney

Some years ago, I reviewed videos of two productions of *Love's Labour's Lost*.¹ One of the characters in that play is Jaquenetta, a peasant girl who is wooed by both the rustic Costard and the fantastical Spaniard Don Armado. I think that Jaquenetta is an important character. She is the only female in the play to be fought over, and the only female to conceive a life within the play's frame—the announcement of which is immediately followed by the appearance of Marcade, the Messenger of Death. While the lords and ladies play word games, Jaquenetta reminds us of fundamental realities. So I kept my eye out for historical figures that might shed some light on Jaquenetta, and eventually found two of them:

1. Jaquenete Vautrollier. In 1558 the Huguenot printer Thomas Vautrollier and his wife Jaqueline (usually called Jaquenete) fled France to avoid religious persecution. He set up shop in London and became quite successful. In 1579 he hired a teenaged apprentice named Richard Field who had grown up in Stratford-on-Avon, not far from the Shakspeare family. Vautrollier died in 1587. Two years later, the twenty-eight-year old Field married Jaquenete, who had been running the print shop. She was old enough to be his mother, and it is speculated that the shop was advised to have an English front man to deflect a possible Catholic backlash against the Protestant propaganda the firm had been printing.

The Field-Vautrollier firm is notable for having introduced the name “William Shakespeare” to the literary world—it printed *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1594. The printed texts of these poems are unusually accurate, and it has been suggested that Oxford personally supervised the printing. Perhaps Field recalled the name of his former Stratford neighbor and suggested it to Oxford as a possible pen name.

However, I can find nothing in the life of Jaquenete Vautrollier that suggests the sought-after wench of *Love's Labour's Lost*. The timing is off—the play was written in late 1578 or early 1579, and the poems were printed fifteen years later.

2. Jacquetta of Luxembourg was born in 1416. Seventeen years later she became the second wife of John, Duke of Bedford, then age forty-four, and the brother of Henry V, King of England. They lived in Rouen, where John commanded the English forces fighting the French. He died in 1435, and Jacquetta was commanded to join the English court. A personable young captain named Richard Woodville was assigned to accompany her, and a short time later it was found that Richard and Jacquetta had secretly married.

Their first-born child was a daughter, whom they named Elizabeth. She grew up to be a beauty, and at fifteen she married a young knight, Sir John Grey of Groby. She bore John two sons, but he died in 1461. John had fought for the wrong side in the Wars of the Roses, and his land was to be confiscated, but when his charming widow approached the victorious Edward IV to plead for her property, the king was so taken with her that he made her his queen.

The royal couple had a fruitful marriage—she gave him three sons and seven daughters. The first child, Elizabeth of York, arrived in 1466, and like her mother grew up to be a beauty. In 1483, the exiled Henry Tudor, building political support for his planned overthrow of Richard III, promised to marry her if his campaign was successful. Henry defeated Richard in the battle of Bosworth Field and thus became Henry VII. He married Elizabeth in 1486.

Their first son, Arthur, was born that same year. He made a very promising Prince of Wales, but died in 1502, which made Henry, the second son, heir to the throne. He was crowned Henry VIII on the death of his father in 1509. Some years later he married Anne Boleyn, and in 1533 they had a daughter, who on 15 January 1559 was crowned Elizabeth I, Queen of England.

Thus Jacquetta of Luxembourg is Queen Elizabeth's great-great-grandmother.

The Irresistible Charm of the Dairymaid. So we have a link between Jacquetta-Jaquenetta and Queen Elizabeth. The elder Ogburns² intuited this; in analyzing *Love's Labour's Lost*, they wrote that

Jaquenetta seems to be a comedic presentation of the Queen, whom Oxford was obliged to court in a clandestine manner. Cleopatra-Elizabeth will one day admit that she is

No more but e'en a woman, and commanded
By such poor passion as the maid that milks
And does the meanest chores.³

In Act 1 Scene 2, Constable Dull says of Jaquenetta, “For this damsel, I must keep her at the park; she is allowed for the dey-woman . . .” (that is, she is approved to serve as dairy-woman). So both Cleopatra-Elizabeth and Jaquenetta are seen as dairymaids—the former in her imagination, the latter in her occupation.⁴

Is Elizabeth associated with a milkmaid elsewhere in the plays? Yes—in Act 3 Scene 1 of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the comic character Launce describes his girlfriend:

I am in love, but a team of horse shall not pluck
that from me; nor who 'tis I love; and yet 'tis a
woman; but what woman I will not tell myself;
and yet 'tis a milkmaid . . .

The connection to Elizabeth is established by a *hairs/heirs* pun when Speed joins the scene and says (among other things), “She hath more hair than wit, and more faults than hairs, and more wealth than faults.” Elizabeth did indeed have more faults than heirs.

There is in fact a robust literary tradition of celebrating the erotic appeal of the milkmaid. Representative examples are given below.

1. *Adam Bede* by George Eliot⁵ (1859). The main female character is milkmaid Hetty Sorrel. “Hetty’s was a spring-tide beauty; it was the beauty of frisking things, round-limbed, gambolling, circumventing you with a false air of innocence”
2. *Patience*, a comic opera, libretto by William S. Gilbert (1881). “The man loves—wildly loves! . . . His weird fancy has lighted, for the nonce, on Patience, the village milkmaid. . . . But yesterday I caught him in her dairy, eating fresh butter with a tablespoon.”
3. *The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid* by Thomas Hardy (1883). The title character is Margaret Tucker. “Her face was of the hereditary type among families down in these parts: sweet in expression, perfect in hue, and somewhat irregular in feature. Her eyes were of a liquid brown. . . . She was the ‘Margery’ who had been told not to ‘bide about long on the road.’”
4. *The Producers*, a film by Mel Brooks (1967). The character played by Estelle Winwood, known only as ‘Hold Me, Touch Me,’ joins producer Max Bialystock in his office and suggests a role-playing exercise: “I’ll be the innocent little milkmaid, and you be the naughty stable boy.”

Who Impregnated Jaquenetta? Costard and Don Armado both participate in the “Masque of the Nine Worthies,” Costard as Pompey and Armado as Hector, the hero of Troy. Costard interrupts Armado’s presentation to announce Jaquenetta’s pregnancy (V.ii. 672-677):

Fellow Hector, she is gone; she is two months on her way. . . Faith, unless you play the honest Troyan, the poor wench is cast away. She’s quick; the child brags in her belly already. ’Tis yours.

So Costard claims that Armado is responsible for Jaquenetta’s pregnancy. Is he telling the truth? In his arraignment before the King (I.i.281-315), Costard has shown that he is slippery with words and intent on evading responsibility. He is part of Jaquenetta’s world and has the advantage of familiarity, while Armado is a stranger, a foreigner. Costard seems strangely knowledgeable about the details of the pregnancy. And one of the two songs that end the play sings of the cuckoo, who “mocks married men.”

I believe that Costard has played the naughty stable boy.

Endnotes:

1. C. V. Berney, *Shakespeare Matters* 1.1 (Fall 2001).
2. Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, *This Star of England*, p. 198.
3. *Antony and Cleopatra* IV.xiii.73-75.
4. Costard provides another Elizabeth clue when he says of Jaquenetta, “This was no damsel neither, sir, she was a virgin” (I.i.292). His following line—“I deny her virginity”—must have gotten a huge laugh in court performances.
5. A small group of mentally unstable researchers has proposed that “George Eliot” is the *nom de plume* of a woman named Mary Ann Evans. This is a transparent attempt to push a subversive feminist agenda.

Edward de Vere, an Insinuator like Hamlet

by Earnest Moncrief

The Power of Insinuation

Prince Hamlet famously asked this of his players: “*And couldst not thou for a need study me some dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert?*” [1603 Quarto; Sc. 7 at 394-396]

With his text insinuation Hamlet caught the conscience of the King. The resulting allegorical play, within the *Gonzago* play that is within the *Hamlet* play, lifted Renaissance drama to new heights on the stage and page.

A precocious teenaged Edward de Vere perhaps honed similar tactical and strategic writing skills while assisting his uncle Arthur Golding translate Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (1567) from Latin to English. Uncle Golding was otherwise a Puritanical, pedestrian

translator before and after his sudden *Metamorphoses* skyrocket. Prodigious word skills and dramatic creativity from his nephew may have fueled that Ovid project.¹ The belief that de Vere wrote most or key parts of texts credited to others is argued compellingly by many Oxfordians.² Contemporaneous dedications to or praises of Vere suggest that his contributions to others included literary vision, edits and text as well as financial patronage.³

1598: Robert Tofte and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*

Scholars generally credit the “emphatically minor” poet Robert Tofte in 1598 for the first published claim, within his love poem entitled *Alba*, of attending a Bard canon play.⁴ It was *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (“LLL”), for which a 1598 quarto was also the first published play naming as author Shakespeare (or *W. Shakespere* in this case).

Below are eight consecutive internal stanzas from Tofte's 380-stanza *Alba* that describe his *LLL* attendance at court. In bold print are the four stanzas (numbered 5–8) commonly cited in describing his attendance; above them are the four immediately prior stanzas (numbered 1-4, not bolded) that are rarely if ever so cited⁵:

TAWNY and BLACK, my Courtly Colours be,
Tawny, (because forsooke I am) I weare:
Black, (since mine ALBAS Love is dead to me, 1
Yet liveth in another) I do beare.
Then welcome TAWNY, since I am forsaken,
And come deare BLACK, since my Love's from me taken.

The princelike Eagle's never smit with Thunder,
Nor th' Olive tree with Lightning blasted showes: 2
No marveile then it is to me, or wonder,
Though my Coy Dame, in Love to me hard growes:
More deafe to me she is then sensles stock.
Her Hart's obdurate like the hardned rock.

But what meane I thus without Reason prate?
I am no more forsaken then I was:
My Love's no more dead then it was of late; 3
For yet mine ALBA nere for me did passe.
For Love's not dead, she never me forsooke,
For ALBA (nere yet) me in favour tooke.

As many Favours have I as before:
For since I her (first) lov'd she me disdainde,
And still doth so, still wounding me the more, 4
As in despayre I have ere since remainde:
Yet I in BLACK and TAWNY Weedes will goe,
Because forsooke, and dead I am with woe.

**LOVES LABOR LOST, I once did see a Play,
Ycleped so, so called to my paine,
Which I to heare to my small Joy did stay, 5
Giving attendance on my froward Dame,
My misgiving minde presaging to me Ill,
Yet was I drawne to see it gainst my Will.**

**This *Play* no *Play*, but Plague was unto me,
For there I lost the Love I liked most;
And what to others seemde a Jest to be, 6
I, that (in earnest) found unto my cost,
To every one (save me) twas *Comicall*,
Whilst *Tragick* like to me it did befall.**

**Each Actor plaid in cunning wise his part,
But chiefly Those entrapt in *Cupids* snare:
Yet all was fained, twas not from the hart, 7
They seemde to grieve, but yet they felt no care:
Twas I that Griefe (indeed) did beare in brest,
The others did but make a show in Jest.**

**Yet neither faining theirs, nor my meere Truth,
Could make her once so much as for to smile:
Whilst she (despite of pitie milde and ruth) 8
Did sit as skorning of my Woes the while;
Thus did she sit to see LOVE lose his LOVE,
Like hardned Rock that force nor power can move.**

Considered together these eight stanzas hoist tall, tawny Oxfordian flags. Might Edward de Vere have inserted or edited them in the *Alba* poem as an allegorical claim to catch the conscience of authorship truth seekers? Tofte's *Alba* stanzas use a six-line, iambic pentameter, *ababcc* rhyme pattern laced with alliterations. That popular verse form was a favorite of the young de Vere and reappeared in his *Venus & Adonis*.⁶ Another coincidence is an ambiguously intimate, alliterative, commendatory poem exchange that is rich in similes and imagery between Tofte and "Ignoto"—a pseudonym ascribed by some scholars to Vere.⁷

In stanza 1, a "minor" poet like Tofte presumably wore "Courtly Colours" because he was attending a court performance of *LLL* in the presence of Queen Elizabeth. "TAWNY," an atypical heraldry color, was the prominent heraldry color for Edward de Vere⁸ and coincidentally also the "Courtly" color of poet Tofte. A related coincidence is "tawny and black" for Tofte's mourning colors; this color pairing was also cited for love-death mourning by de Vere in a youthful poem in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* by Richard Edwards, published in 1576.⁹

Stanzas 2, 5 and 8 suggest that the disdainful "Dame" of Tofte/Vere also attended this Christmas *LLL* performance and was vexed.¹⁰ Was that anger due to the presence of Tofte/Vere or was it because she was being portrayed on stage as the imperious, cutting Rosaline¹¹ and/or as the wanton Jaquenetta?

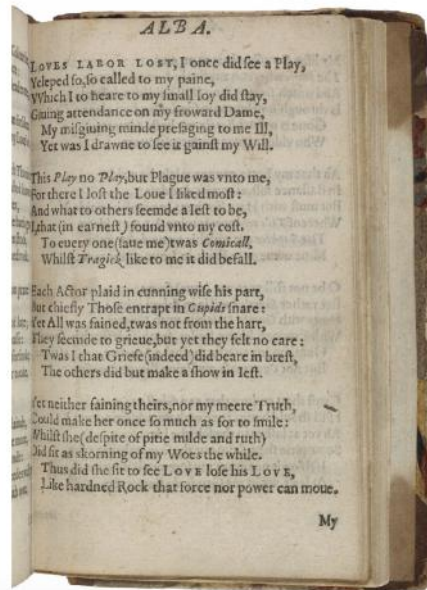
De Vere's two epic poems, *Venus & Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), both named "William Shakespeare" as their author. But in the 1598 *LLL* quarto Edward de Vere—the poet self-named as a shaker of spears¹²—had somehow lost his *a*. He suddenly became *W. Shakespere*. It is inconceivable that Lord Oxford, who chose his unique, verb-noun moniker based on shaking a spear, would acquiesce to the printing of his first non-anonymous play with a mangled pseudonym that resembled the name of an obscure Stratford player. *Alba* stanzas suggest that this pseudonym theft and blurring was imposed on him.

In Tofte's stanza 1 above, view "ALBAS" as referring to de Vere's entire play canon, and "Love" as referring specifically to the comedy *LLL*. De Vere may be lamenting that "Love" (the play) "is from me taken." In stanza 5, consider "against my Will" as this most lamentable pun: the "William Shakespeare" pseudonym that de Vere invented for his two earlier epic poems was by 1598 suddenly being turned against his desire, against his essence, contrary to his original invention of "Will"—to blur it so as to begin grafting canon authorship to a common actor. Thus de Vere's *LLL*

hereafter "lives in another"—i.e., in the player *Guillermus Shaksper*e of Stratford.¹³

In stanza 3 de Vere rationalizes his plight: he previously received no print credit for his plays (i.e., he had no "Favours" in stanza 4), so consequently he cannot now be robbed, i.e., de Vere cannot lose plays that he never publicly claimed were his.

In stanza 8 more tawny flags unfurl with the poet's mention of "meere Truth." The bedrock in de Vere's family motto is "truth." *Vero Nihil Verius* is typically translated as: *nothing is truer than truth*. Consider the possibility here that "meere Truth" is another punning, revealing veracity.



1598: Francis Meres and *Palladis Tamia*

In 1598 Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia* named "Shakespeare" as the author of *LLL* and eleven other plays. Meres also separately listed Edward de Vere as among the "best for Comedy." Consider the possibility that de Vere, knowing that his *LLL* play, pseudonym and entire canon authorship were being "taken from" him, supplied Meres with this list of a dozen plays to be credited to "Shakespeare" in *Palladis Tamia*. Four of them were not yet published. The identity of *Love labours wonne* remains disputed and was likely unpublished.¹⁴ As to *King John*, only

the apocryphal *Troublesome Raigne of John* had been published anonymously in 1591.¹⁵

By insinuating this twelve-play list via Meres, de Vere would have planted myriad tawny Oxfordian flags, thereby cleverly signaling his authorship of a dozen past and upcoming plays and reclaiming (stealthily, in Meres's text) his properly spelled verb-noun pseudonym: "Shakespeare."¹⁶

Might all these suggested Vere text insinuations and allegories be not "meere Truth," but merely coincidences, a wholly imagined ghost? Yes, they could. But perhaps Tofte and Meres had an emphatically major insinuator, poet, prompter and ghostwriter hidden behind the curtain. Remember that *Hamlet's* ghost was proven honest after a tactical insinuation of strategic text.

Conclusion

The forced parting of Edward de Vere from his "Shakespeare" pseudonym and canon was underway by 1598. With the *LLL* quarto de Vere's self-chosen pseudonym for his two poems was beginning to be blurred and, thereafter in phases, bestowed on another person.¹⁷ This incipient authorial axing is suggested by: (a) allegorical text clues that de Vere could have inserted into the 1598 Robert Tofte poem *Alba* and (b) a 1598 listing of English plays and playwrights in *Palladis Tamia* that de Vere could have given to Francis Meres.

Who orchestrated, and what events triggered, Vere's pseudonym and canon loss? An "incomparable" starting point to answer those questions is the 1594 publication of *Willobie His Avisa*. But before diving into that rich allegorical black hole this author (in Earnest) requires tea and some ever evasive cucumber sandwiches.

Endnotes

1. See, e.g., Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (1984), 444-449.
2. See, e.g., Richard M. Waugaman, *Newly Discovered Works by "William Shakespeare," aka Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford*, 2nd Edition, Kindle (2017). Dr. Waugaman finds de Vere's hand in the Golding *Metamorphoses*, the anonymous *Arte of English Poesy* now commonly credited to Puttenham, and in poems ascribed to "Ignoto."
3. See, e.g., Hank Whittemore, *100 Reasons Shake-speare was the Earl of Oxford* (2016), 100-103. See also Whittemore's blog at <https://hankwhittemore.com/2012/02/20/re-de-vere-s-possible-use-of-thomas-watson-as-a-pseudonym-or-as-an-agent-for-text-insertions>.
4. G.R. Hibbard, ed., *Love's Labour's Lost, The Oxford Shakespeare*. New York (1990, reprinted 2008), 1-2. Professor Hibbard labels Robert Tofte an "emphatically minor poet."
5. *Alba: The Month's Minde of a Melancholy Lover*. London: Printed by Felix Kingston, for Matthew Lownes (1598), 104-105. Reprint edited by Rev. Alexander Grosart (1880). *Alba* stanza capitalizations, italics and spellings herein are true to that reprint.
6. These eight *Alba* stanzas lack the style and poetic heights of *Venus* and *Lucrece*. But de Vere here would surely suit "word to the action," i.e., mesh with the style of the putative author, as did Prince Hamlet in both his *Gonzago* play insertion and in his rewrite of Claudius's letter to the King of England, who axed Guildenstern and Rosencrantz instead of Hamlet.
7. J. Thomas Looney, *The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*. London (1921), a Forgotten Books Classic Reprint, pp. liv-lvi. See also note 2.
8. Tawny is de Vere's heraldry color in his "Knight of the Tree of the Sun" allegory that in 1581 was read by Vere's page to Queen Elizabeth before Vere's tilt victory. See Stephanie Hopkins Hughes: <https://politicworm.com/plays-poems-other-em-texts/oxfords-sweet-speech-given-at-the-1581-tilts/>. See also Richard Malim, *The Earl of Oxford and Making of "Shakespeare"* (2012), at 171 re the "tawnie" allusion to Vere by Thomas Nashe.
9. This poem is cited by Looney, *op. cit.*, at 27-28. Further Tofte/de Vere word and metaphor overlaps occur: e.g., an "obdurate" woman or heart in *Alba* stanza 2 is common in de Vere's canon; the word *Ycleped* (stanza 5) occurs only once in the canon: yes, in *LLL*.
10. Eva Turner Clark, in *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York [1931], 107), cites two predecessor masques to *LLL* (*Double Maske*) as having been performed at court in 1578/9. Kevin Gilvary, in *Dating Shakespeare's Plays* (Kent UK [2010], ch. 7), puts the Christmas performance cited on the 1598 quarto title page as occurring between 1594 and 1598. In 1598, when the *Alba* poem and *LLL* were both published, the printed quarto *LLL* title page said the play was "[n]ewly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespere." The quarto text thus may differ from that seen and heard earlier in Elizabeth's court.
11. J. Thomas Looney, in "*Shakespeare Identified in Edward De Vere*, (New York [1920], 247), and others liken the *LLL* character Rosaline to the Dark Lady of the 1609 *Sonnets*.
12. Among the personal, topical bases for de Vere's pseudonym are: (a) his tilting acclaim with his spear; (b) Gabriel Harvey's 1578 observation (in Latin) that de Vere's countenance "shakes a spear"; and (c) the spear-bearing Greek goddess of wit and war: Pallas Athena Minerva. See Katherine Chiljan's presentation at the 2015 Ashland, Oregon, Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conference at: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ezk1B-airWI>
13. In 1597, the year before the *LLL* quarto was published, the player Shakspere bought the New Place property in Stratford for the heady, incomparable sum of 60 pounds.
14. Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury* (1598). Meres also echoed the high praise for comedy given to de Vere in *The Arte of English Poesy*, a 1589 treatise that de Vere himself may have shaped or written (see note 2). Oxfordian scholars have unlocked the mathematical symmetries, asymmetries and veiled pointers in Meres's lists of plays and playwrights. See Robert Detobel and K.C. Ligon, *Brief Chronicles* Vol. 1 (2009), 97-108. Earl Showerman, in *Brief Chronicles* Vol. 1 (2009), 135-136, shows how *Much Ado About Nothing* aligns well with the themes, classical allusions and characters in *LLL* and thus may be the play labeled "*Love labours wonne*" in Meres's comedy list.
15. Ramon Jiménez, "The Troublesome Raigne of John," *The Oxfordian* Vol. XII (2010), 21-55.
16. Robert Sean Brazil, in *Edward de Vere and The Shakespeare Printers* (Seattle [2010], 85), states: "So the author of the list used by Meres (presumably F. Meres himself) had access to a certain amount of information that had no verifiable counterpart in the real world" (emphasis added). Perhaps Master Meres accessed a Master of Insinuation, Edward de Vere.
17. Some scholars speculate that Shakspere and Richard Burbage briefly shared a theater with or joined the acting company of Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke (he who married Mary Sidney and sired the *First Folio*'s "Incomparable Paire of Brethren") before joining the Chamberlain's Men. See, e.g.: F. E. Halliday, *A Shakespeare Companion*, (New York [1964], 361- 362; Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites* (New York [2009], 28); and Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company 1594-1642* (New York [2011], 17-18). Insofar as parties saw the de Vere canon as heaping ridicule and affronts on members of court or key families' reputations, the common player Shakspere was a fortuitous, phonetically miraculous person with which to begin divorcing the canon from its true author. Later authorship flashpoints concerning de Vere's canon separation occurred in 1601 (the Essex revolt), 1609 (*Shake-speare's Sonnets*) and 1620-23 (the Spanish Marriage Crisis and the First Folio).



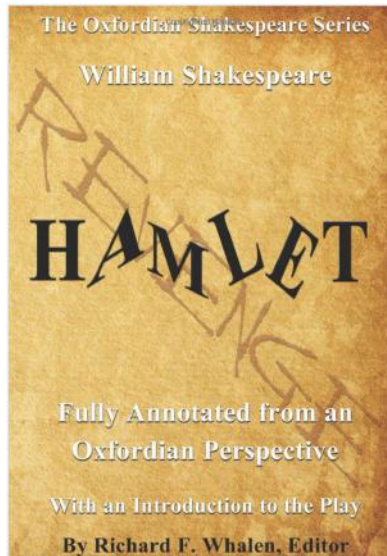
Book Reviews

“Hamlet,” *Fully Annotated from an Oxfordian Perspective*. Edited by Richard F. Whalen (The Oxfordian Shakespeare Series, 2018, Amazon.com CreateSpace, 333 pp.)
Reviewed by Theresa Lauricella

Scholars tend to agree that *Hamlet* is the most autobiographical play in the Shakespeare canon, yet it is puzzling that many editions of *Hamlet* rarely include biographical details either in the editorial commentary or within the footnotes that inform the play. Editor Richard Whalen fills in the necessary biographical blanks in the newest entry in the Oxfordian Shakespeare Series, *Hamlet, Fully Annotated from an Oxfordian Perspective*.

Whalen follows the standard trajectory of Shakespeare editors by including discourse on the playwright’s life and times, but in this case, specific names matter. Whalen supplies the reader details regarding the life of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, throughout the volume. In this edition, Whalen includes short introductory essays on “The Dramatist’s Life,” “His Stage and His Audience,” “The Composition and Publication of the Plays” and “The Controversy Over the Author’s Identity.” They are followed by a lengthier “Introduction to *Hamlet*,” and (following the play text) Whalen’s long article “*Hamlet’s Sources and Influences*,” previously published in this *Newsletter* (Winter 2018). The play text is derived from the Second Quarto (1604, transcribed for this edition by Brig. Gen. Jack Shuttlesworth [ret.], former head of the English Department at the United States Air Force Academy), with some interpolations from the First Quarto (1603) and the Folio (1623) texts. As with many editions of Shakespeare’s works, the orthography has been modernized.

When referring to the author in the footnotes, Whalen uses the name “Oxford” rather than “Shakespeare.” This mitigates any possible confusion when Whalen also defines words and phrases within the play that Will Shakspeare of Stratford couldn’t have known. For example, in Act III, Scene IV, Hamlet says “the engineer hoist with his own petard,” showing knowledge of military terms and the French language. There are many references like these signifying courtly local color. Whalen identifies references to tennis, archery, falconry, horsemanship, coursing and other hunting metaphors, astronomy, dancing, music, art (Titian’s specifically), and contemporary events at the Elizabethan court.



Whalen draws special focus to the myriad astronomical references in *Hamlet*, in particular the Ptolemaic versus Copernican theories of cosmology. Some readers may be more familiar with these ideas being associated with a play by Bertolt Brecht rather than Shakespeare. Brecht’s epic play *Life of Galileo* begins in 1609 as Galileo first invents his telescope, and concludes in 1637 while he is still under the watchful eye of the Church. Since Galileo’s work took place after the Elizabethan Golden Age, it would seem that the author of Shakespeare’s plays couldn’t have known about Galileo’s theories. Further, it is highly unlikely that Shakspeare of Stratford would even had have

knowledge of Copernicus, who, of course, influenced Galileo. It is highly likely that he would have believed, as most Elizabethans did, that the earth was the center of the universe. But Whalen shows how Oxford likely knew otherwise, as he had access to rare copies of Copernicus’s book.

Whalen makes a case for Hamlet’s antic disposition being not quite “put on” but rather manic, or what we now would call bipolar. While this is certainly a compelling idea, it doesn’t quite connect with the play. Prior to hearing the Ghost’s tale, Hamlet is dysphoric, but afterward he selects when to be mad, based upon his audience. Whalen claims Hamlet’s psychology mirrors Oxford’s, but that may only be a slight reflection; Hamlet is a fictional character bound to a plot, whereas Oxford was a real person with real-world issues.

Whalen also makes bold statements regarding Claudius and Hamlet’s motivations before Shakespeare reveals information in the play. Hamlet cannot suspect Claudius of regicide until the Ghost tells his tale. Up to that point, Hamlet may think something is amiss because his uncle sits on the throne and his mother married swiftly, but he doesn’t yet have any definitive clues. It is important that Hamlet not be suspicious of Claudius too early, otherwise it would diminish the Ghost’s revelation at the end of Act I, Scene V, a revelation that has been in process since the beginning of the play.

While the text is a treasure trove of annotations, there could perhaps be more content. Even though this edition includes the several introductory articles mentioned above, it might be helpful to readers who are unfamiliar with Oxford to include even more material relating to Oxford or to the Elizabethan court.

This edition is chock-full of line notes: definitions, glosses and other explanatory material. All the notes appear on the left-hand pages, directly opposite the relevant play text. Even so, it can be a challenge to navigate them. Some readers may prefer to read the notes

first, scene by scene or page by page, rather than to scan the line number for a corresponding note.

Overall, this edition serves both novice and expert Oxfordians. Novices clearly receive the biggest bang for their buck, and will find layers of new meaning in the

script. The expert will delight in having Oxford's details within one volume in this most autobiographical play.

[This Oxfordian edition of *Hamlet* is available through Amazon.com, in hardcopy for \$14.99 or a Kindle edition for \$5.99.]

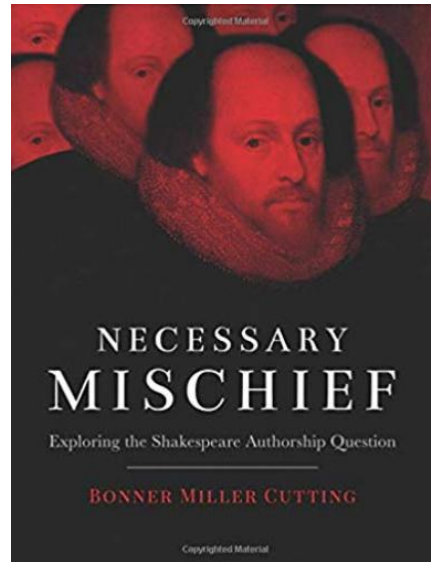
***Necessary Mischief: Exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question* by Bonner Miller Cutting (Jennings, Louisiana: Minos Publishing, 2018)**
Reviewed by Michael St. Clair

In these days of “fake news” and disparagement of expertise, it is a relief to find, in the acknowledgment page of Bonner Miller Cutting's excellent book, *Necessary Mischief: Exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question*, the words that published works on the Authorship Question must “rest on bedrock facts, clearly presented and meticulously investigated.” Her book fulfills this ideal admirably.

Necessary Mischief (the title is taken from a letter of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford) contains ten essays, mostly published previously, but herein revised and rewritten.

The Shakespeare Authorship Coalition agrees that the purpose of the “Shakespeare Industry” (the tourist business in Stratford-upon-Avon, and the conventional Shakespeare writings that hold William of Stratford-upon-Avon, to be the writer of the Shakespeare plays) is to promote public reverence for the traditional narrative. A well-known defender of the traditional Stratfordian story is James Shapiro. Cutting's first chapter is a detailed critique and rebuttal of Shapiro's 2010 book, *Contested Will*. She reviews how John Thomas Looney's groundbreaking 1920 book, “*Shakespeare*” *Identified*, methodically and systematically established eighteen personal characteristics that Looney expected to find in the writer of the Shakespeare plays. He did not find a match in the man from Stratford-upon-Avon, but rather discovered a perfect fit in Edward de Vere.

Cutting details Shapiro's attempts to belittle Looney and his use of rhetoric, rather than argument, to dismiss Looney's discovery. Over the almost one hundred years since Looney's work, scholars have gathered in support of his original conclusions much new data—such as studies displaying how Oxford's travels in Italy coincide with settings and events in the Shakespeare plays. Shapiro's case lacks a strong evidentiary base and argues, using circular reasoning, that all it took was “genius” to write the plays, not accounting for the encyclopedic knowledge of classical and Renaissance knowledge displayed in the canon. Could the man from Stratford-



upon-Avon have learned from books, even though he had little education and no books are mentioned in his last will and testament? Not likely.

Cutting's second and third chapters drill deeply into questions of that last will and testament. It is a three-page document that shows the mindset and personality of the testator. A significant disconnect stands between the mundane and deficient will and the great literary works the testator supposedly wrote. Shakespeare's plays, such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, and *Measure for Measure*, reveal a storehouse of legal knowledge, but the will is in a pedestrian format and is remarkably silent about any books or

manuscripts or desks or bookshelves that other literary men of that age mentioned and disposed of in their last testaments. No bequest is made to people that one would expect a great literary figure, familiar with the court and the world of actors and the theater, to make. No mention is made of any shares in the Globe theater or to income from theatrical performances.

Perhaps the most conspicuous bequest was to his wife of some thirty-three years: “my second best bed with the furniture.” The testator names his two daughters three times each, but mentions his wife only here, and not by name. The will does not evoke the image of a cultivated, genteel poet and dramatist of sublime sensitivity and culture.

The fourth chapter grapples with the subject of censorship as it relates to the Shakespeare canon. Many laws were on the books empowering Tudor and Jacobean authorities to control and censor the spoken and written word, especially any that was critical of the government. Quite noticeably, the man from Stratford-upon-Avon passed unnoticed by the Elizabethan authorities; nothing in the historical record suggests that government authorities were even aware of him as a writer. Nor is there any correspondence or hint that members of the London literati ever met him, corresponded with him or even visited him in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Cutting reviews the relevant information about the Revels Office and the Stationers Company which controlled what the public could see and hear through licensing. The theater was especially scrutinized for any

potential danger to the state. Key playwrights, such as Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd and Ben Jonson, received unwelcome attention. The writer of the Shakespeare plays, however, appears to have gotten off scot free, even with plays that featured John Falstaff and Polonius, characters who must have ruffled feathers of several powerful families. Such invulnerability raises questions about just who wrote these plays. Further, the man from Stratford-upon-Avon was never questioned by authorities about the play *Richard II*, which was performed by special request right before the Essex Rebellion and seems to have been intended to embolden the followers of Essex and Southampton and rouse the populace in support of their uprising.

The author of works that could insult important families, depict the deposition of monarchs, and even be used for inciting rebellion, must have inhabited a special place in the Elizabethan court and have been exempt from government oversight when far less serious transgressions were severely punished. Surely, that author could not be the man from Stratford-upon-Avon.

Chapters 5 and 6 are a scholarly perusal of wardship in sixteenth century England. Though it is a technical topic for most modern readers, it is important to understand how wardship itself plays a part in the Authorship Question. Wardship had several purposes, among which were to provide funds for the Tudor monarchy, reward its loyal servants and to help win over prominent Catholic families to Anglicanism.

Edward de Vere's father, the 16th Earl of Oxford, had his lands extorted and, following his father's death in 1562, the young Edward was for nine years the ward of Sir William Cecil, later Lord Burghley. Cecil was the Master of the Court of Wards, a power in the Privy Council, and the Queen's closest adviser. He paved the way for his ward to marry his daughter, Anne. The marriage between Edward and Anne was not a success. Money and power play key roles here. Cecil had a key role in young Edward's loss of lands and patrimony, which stoked a fury and bitter frustration that, as Cutting points out, drove Edward de Vere to transform his excellent education into a weapon of vengeance. The Shakespeare canon played out on stage a family feud, a contest of wills between the wily, powerful Cecil and his brilliant literary son-in-law. Cutting and other Oxfordian scholars cast great light on characters in the Shakespeare plays that were likely based on historical personages, including William and Anne Cecil, as well as other people that Edward de Vere knew and interacted with. Further, it is very likely that the Cecil family obliterated de Vere from the chronicles of the times for multiple reasons, and that we wound up with the plays being attributed to the man from Stratford-upon-Avon.

The last three chapters of Cutting's book treat matters somewhat more peripheral to central Oxfordian concerns. Chapter 8 concerns "Lady Anne Clifford's Great Picture," a large portrait from the 1640s of the

second wife of Philip Herbert, one of the "incomparable paire" of brothers to whom the First Folio is dedicated. She was a historical person of interest, well educated with a lifelong interest in literature. She would certainly have known who the author of the Shakespeare plays was. In the background of this portrait are depicted some fifty books with clearly discernable titles and authors' names. But the First Folio is missing from the depicted shelves. Anne Clifford would have wanted her posterity to know and appreciate her cultural heritage. But if she knew de Vere as author, she would need to distance the scandalous plays from their primary subjects, the queen and her powerful circle. Anne Clifford would not seek to call attention to the plays or the identities of the people depicted covertly or satirically in them which might fuel greater public animosity toward the aristocracy. As a Royalist, Anne would realize the plays held dangerous implications.

Another painting which Cutting carefully analyzes is a work by Anthony Van Dyck of the Pembroke family, with a central figure presently identified as Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1676), the second wife of Philip Herbert, 4th Earl of Pembroke. Cutting, however, argues convincingly that the true identity of the woman in the portrait is actually Philip Herbert's first wife, Susan de Vere (1587-1629), daughter of Edward de Vere, and hence this painting has a connection to the Authorship Issue. The First Folio was dedicated to William and Philip Herbert, brothers who lent their names, political clout and probably financial support so that the volume could be published. Cutting persuasively argues that it was possible that the brothers sought to preserve the theatrical masterpieces of a family patriarch. No such interest was shown by the descendants of the man from Stratford-upon-Avon.

The final chapter compellingly argues against the notions that Edward de Vere was the son of Elizabeth or a love interest of her. Elizabeth's contribution to the destruction of de Vere's inheritance, her treatment of others as favorites and her passing over de Vere for honors militate against any mythic intimate connection between Elizabeth and Edward de Vere. Interestingly, Cutting does not rule out the possibility that Princess Elizabeth may have been pregnant during her early teenage years.

Cutting's book is a valuable addition to Oxfordian scholarship. A careful reading of her reasoned and well researched chapters will reward those who seek data-based insights into the Authorship Question. Readers who are new to the Oxfordian literature may find the going a bit slower, as Cutting packs much into each chapter.

Necessary Mischief includes two Appendices (a modern typographical transcription of the last will and testament of William of Stratford-upon-Avon, and a list of the books in the Appleby Triptych discussed in Chapter 8), a bibliography and a detailed index.

***Nutshell* by Ian McEwan (New York: Doubleday, 2016)**

A review essay by Michael Kositsky

From the very first sentence—"So here I am, upside down in a woman"—the reader must completely suspend disbelief in order to get through the rest of this remarkable, multi-layered novel. After all, the protagonist is a male fetus! Not any old fetus, but a brilliant, erudite one. In fact, an obviously Genius Fetus (GF).

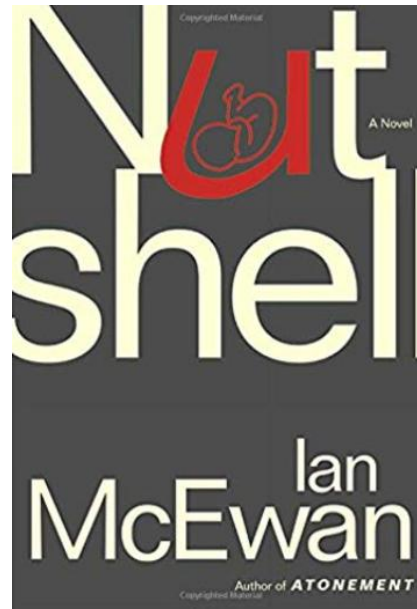
The plot loosely follows Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: GF's mother Trudy (Gertrude) is having an affair with his uncle Claude (Claudius); the name is probably pronounced "clod," as he certainly is one. They are conspiring to murder John, GF's father, a poet. GF, presumably an unborn Hamlet, overhears their scheming but is unable to take action because he is unfortunately trapped inside his mother's womb. Not able to warn or protect his father, he resorts to soliloquizing, philosophizing, dreaming, ranting, and at one point even attempting suicide.

How is this possible? "How is it that I, not even young, not even born yesterday could know so much?" he asks. "I have my sources," he informs us. He goes on to elucidate some of the ways he "gathers information": through "pillow talk"; "kitchen and restaurant whispers"; "radio talk and bulletins"; podcasts; TV; and telephone (he hears both sides of the conversation).

GF employs a number of techniques whenever he's unsure about particular facts. They're enumerated during the course of the book: he "exercises the imagination"; conjectures; conjures; postulates; uses "primal speculation"; infers; uses "reasonable suspicion"; is "forced to make guesses and theorize." (To paraphrase Mark Twain, this sounds like the foundation for a Shakespeare biography.) He also uses his "feelings and senses" to help him cope with and understand situations and events that are bewildering or confusing, even for a GF.

Fortunately, GF is his own worst critic and thus recognizes some of his limitations: "Various of my conjectures have proved wrong"; "Who knows what's true?"; "Nothing here is real"; "I've been wrong before"; "I'll never know"; "I can't trust my judgement"; "Nothing fits"; "But I may be wrong."

So here we have a GF who is able to discourse at length about current events, wine, architecture, religion, technology, politics and history, and who is comfortable alluding to and quoting from *Ulysses*, *The Wasteland*, *To his Coy Mistress*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and, of course, *Hamlet*. Moreover, he is a



veritable floating encyclopedia of facts about famous composers, philosophers and historical figures including Einstein, Bach, Stravinsky, Trotsky, Stalin, Plato, Descartes and Freud. He is especially well versed on the lives of poets both contemporary and long dead: Virgil, Montaigne, Donne, Drayton, Heaney, Auden, Hughes, and Plath. Intriguingly, although Shakespeare lurks ghost-like throughout the novel, his name is never mentioned.

One could thoroughly enjoy this book simply as a lark. Let's see what happens if I make my protagonist a fetus, McEwan might have thought. The results are often hilarious while GF's rants are biting, insightful, and topical. The literary conceit of writing a book from the point of view of a fetus,

coupled with the themes of murder and to-revenge-or-not-to-revenge, afford McEwan a platform from which to sound off on a variety of social and political issues. But maybe, like Trudy, McEwan has "devised a plot, pure artifice, a malign fairy-tale" (109). Or it might be that McEwan believes that he could be *bounded in a nutshell and count himself a king of infinite space—were it not that he has bad dreams*, which he feels compelled to dream-weave into sinister plots. Any or all of these explanations will do to captivate and enchant the reader.

But there may be another layer.

In the beginning, I found it difficult to suspend disbelief with regard to the unborn protagonist's striking intellectual powers and range of knowledge. But I sat bolt upright from my usual slumped, relaxed reading position when I came across this speech by GF: "If hypocrisy's the only price, I'll buy the bourgeois life and consider it cheap. And more, I'll hoard grain, be rich, have a coat of arms. NON SANZ DROICT, and mine to a mother's love and is absolute" (43).

Wow! How many people would understand (let alone take notice of) this direct reference to the man from Stratford, the supposed author of the Shakespeare canon? Why does McEwan put it in at all? It isn't necessary for the development of the plot. Is this what GF really aspires to become once he is born and has grown up? Not to be a poet like his father or any of the other poets he idolizes, but a wealthy, upwardly mobile, immoral businessman with a crest and a motto? (Sounds more like his hated uncle Claude!) Earlier in the book GF makes it clear that he has little interest in financial matters, which have generally bored him. With his scores of references to poetry and poets and his frequent disparaging remarks about Claude's profound lack of intelligence and cultural acumen, it seems odd that GF would wish for a life of business over art. "As warm as the embrace of brothers

are John Keats and Wilfred Owen,” he gushes. “I feel their breath upon my lips. Their kiss” (14). What we have here is a deeply conflicted GF, just like Hamlet. On two occasions, while lamenting Trudy’s betrayal of John, GF compares his uncle to his father unfavorably. GF appears confounded when he exclaims, “But to abandon a poet, any poet, for Claude!” (33), then later on, in utter bewilderment, “How did [Trudy] step from John to Claude, from poetry to dribbling cliché?” (116). Ironically, this is exactly what GF proposes to do: to reject the poet’s life and become like his wealthy-to-be uncle. By making this choice he acknowledges that he is being hypocritical, but his deep fear of poverty ostensibly settles the matter.

Taking a closer look at the two brothers in this novel, we learn that GF’s father, John Cairncross, is a “large, large-hearted man pleading his cause without hope, in the outmodish form of a sonnet” (13). He lives by poetry, recites it, teaches it, reviews it, is a patron who “conspires in the advancement of younger poets. . . he owns and runs an impoverished house and has seen into print the first collections of successful poets” (11). He himself is a third-rate writer. At least that’s what we’re initially led to believe. Later, GF is troubled by “the new and difficult rumour of his decency and talent.” According to a witness, “he’d finished his book. And been shortlisted for the Auden Prize” (140). “I’ve been conditioned to believe his poetry was a dud,” GF tells us. “Today, everything is up for revaluation” (149).

About his uncle, GF rails that he is “no more like my father than I to Virgil.” Claude is a “property developer who composes nothing, invents nothing.” He speaks in platitudes and often ends sentences with *but*. He has a devilish streak—“there’s a whiff of sulphur about him” (57)—and he is intent on making a great deal of money any way he can.

In a truly mile-high literary leap, McEwan has GF write a letter (in his mind) to his father. In it GF recalls a time when John recited one of Shakespeare’s sonnets to Trudy (Shakespeare’s name is not mentioned):

The poem is short, dense, bitter to the point of resignation, difficult to understand. The sort that hits you, hurts you, before you’ve followed exactly what was said. It addressed a careless, indifferent reader, a lost lover, a real person, I should think. In fourteen lines it talked of hopeless attachment, wretched preoccupation, longing unresolved and unacknowledged. It summoned a rival, mighty in talent or social rank or both, and it bowed in self-effacement. Eventually, time would have its revenge, but no one would care or even remember, unless they chanced to read these lines. (82-83)

Clearly McEwan believes that the characters in the sonnets are real people, which is not an orthodox position. Exactly what injustice has been committed for time to *have its revenge*? Is McEwan inferring that the true author of the Shakespeare canon has been murdered, “[his] name buried where [his] body is” (Sonnet 72), and that time will have its revenge by someday revealing his actual identity? Is the revenge that will happen “someday” in fact already underway? The *revaluation* that GF previously declares is unfolding *today* would appear to support this.

Furthermore, what does the passage about people not caring or remembering unless they happened to *read these lines* mean? Is McEwan suggesting that the answer can only be found within the works of Mr. Shakespeare, echoing Ben Jonson’s admonition “to look not upon his picture but on his book”?

What I am proposing is that John Cairncross represents Shakespeare (whomever he may be) and Claude represents Shakspere, the man from Stratford. In addition, I submit that *Nutshell* is an extended metaphor on the nature of genius, with the shadow of the Shakespeare authorship question hiding in the background. The reader is now able to extrapolate that it is self-evident that nobody can use imagination, no matter how fertile, to acquire knowledge; that even if we are not born with a totally “blank slate,” as McEwan hints at, it still must “write upon itself as it grows by the day” with personal experience and learning; that in the way readers must totally suspend disbelief in order to read the book, they must do the same to believe that the man from Stratford is the Bard; that the ludicrous proposition that a fetus can ruminate, plan, speculate, recite poems and write letters in his head is no different from asserting that a man (whose life’s documentary evidence has been described as mundane and inconsequential) could miraculously achieve mastery over a wide-ranging series of disciplines—law, medicine, music, languages, affairs of the court, jousting, hawking, etc.—to become the greatest English writer of all time.

Dare I say, methinks McEwan is a doubter. Of course . . . I could be wrong.



Q & A with Steven Sabel (continued from page 1)

know that SOF exists, and to promote the mission of the organization. A big part of my job is to let people know who we are, and that we are available as a resource. It is important to note to the membership that my job is not to define or promote any specific Oxfordian narrative or advance any specific Oxfordian theories. My job is to advance the profile of the organization, and its commitment to research and discussion of the SAQ. Right now, it's really about building the PR and marketing department from the ground up.

BM: How will you do that?

SS: In this first year I want to raise our public profile and build connections how we can. I'm taking a multipronged approach. I'm building our database, and developing media contacts in daily, weekly and monthly publications in areas where members are available to conduct presentations through our Speakers Bureau. We had a very small list of contacts to start with. It was not comprehensive at all, so a lot of my time right now has been spent doing data entry. We are now strong on the East Coast, from Boston to Florida. The Pacific Northwest is covered, as well as California, but in a lot of other media markets the media don't know we exist. I think they'll respond positively once they know we are here.

BM: How has that been going?

SS: At this point we have more than 2,500 media contacts around the country. Eventually, I estimate we should have as many as 7,000 contacts nationally. It is slow going; researching the media outlets in each region, finding the contact information, and then adding that information to our list, but I anticipate that the task should be completed by the spring.

BM: How do you get people to open your emails?

SS: Well, that's the trick, isn't it? I like to use a subject line that suggests to media representatives that we are a resource for them and their readers. By promoting the availability of the experts in our Speakers Bureau, we are letting them know we are available to their communities. Right now, in our test markets, we are experiencing an "open rate" of 25-30 percent, and our "unsubscribe" rate is less than one percent, so journalists are beginning to take notice, even if it is with some skepticism at first. But I am pleased that our email response rates are beating the industry averages in both high open rates and low unsubscribe rates.

BM: You mentioned test markets. What do you mean by that?

SS: Right now, we are directing our efforts toward regions where we have speakers available. The first wave has consisted of emails introducing the organization to the media outlets, and informing them

that we are available as a source for stories, quotes, and information for the members of their newsroom. Next, we follow up with a press release announcing the availability of our Speakers Bureau, which also highlights the speakers who reside in those regions. We have quite a number of highly qualified speakers in the major media markets, but we also have many holes across the country. I don't have speakers in certain areas, such as areas of the deep South, and northern regions from Wisconsin to Wyoming. But if you look at the Speakers Bureau list on our website (<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/speakers-bureau/>) you'll see we can cover most of the entire country. One of my goals is to schedule at least one speaking engagement for each of our speakers by the end of the year.

BM: Is it working?

SS: I'm very happy to say that it is! We had a great article run in the Orlando, Florida, region that has resulted in a request from the Kissimmee area for a speaker in April. In mid-February, Bryan Wildenthal will be making a presentation at the Karpeles Manuscript Museum in Santa Barbara. And I recently received a request from a Kiwanis club in Northern Virginia. So it's starting to work!

BM: Why is that important?

SS: Right now, the only people who know we exist are our own members and our adversaries. What we need to do is direct our time and energy toward neutral parties. We need to make sure the rest of the world knows we exist. Through those efforts, we can build our membership, increase our public profile, and gain momentum in new areas of public opinion. I encourage people to read the "How I Became an Oxfordian" series on the SOF website (<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/category/how-i-became/>). Look at how many of us came to this organization from so many diverse backgrounds and circumstances. But how many of us sort of discovered the SOF by accident? One of my missions is to make it easier for new members to find us and join the organization.

BM: What other activities are you engaging in besides developing a mailing list, and sending out speakers?

SS: Another big part of the multi-pronged effort is to create collateral that can be shared with media outlets and members of the public. We need proper letterhead, business cards, a media kit, and a membership brochure. The media kit will contain information about the history of the movement and our organization, our mission, and our membership. For instance, the list of published authors and their works affiliated with the SOF is astounding and impressive. The membership brochure

will help us gain new members. It will be available in our media kit, and also to our members to distribute as they choose. It will be downloadable from our website, and we will make sure that members of our Speakers Bureau have them in their hands at speaking engagements.

BM: What's your background?

SS: I was a professional journalist for nearly fifteen years, in print, radio and online. I still write a monthly column for an entertainment industry trade publication. In my past, I've managed a staff of reporters, and I have insight into how a newsroom operates. I am proud to have received awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and the California Newspaper Publishers Association for both my writing and my work as an editor. Later, I moved into marketing and public relations for various corporate clients. I've also spent a lifetime in theatre production and management. I am the producing artistic director of the Archway Theatre Company in Burbank, California, and I continue to direct the marketing and PR campaign for my theatre company.

BM: How long have you been a member of SOF?

SS: I think officially for about six years. My first annual conference was the one in Pasadena about six years ago.

BM: Besides the database, media kit and increased visibility, are there any other aspects of your marketing strategy that we should be aware of?

SS: The overall idea is that events are the key to gaining access to the media. Every time we schedule a speaker or an SOF event, it is a reason to send a press release to the media outlets in that market. Even if all we receive is a calendar listing, it is something that will put our name in print for people to see. But the goal is to pitch stories to local reporters about local happenings, and when possible, get them to attend! Outside of the speaking engagements we are already scheduling, our first major event of this year will be in Ashland, Oregon, in July. Earl Showerman has organized a three-day conference at the site of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and at least part of that conference will include an unprecedented public discussion of the Oxfordian movement at an OSF facility (see article, page 12).

BM: What exactly will that include?

SS: The presentation will be an introduction to the SAQ and Edward de Vere that will be open to the public to attend. The event will be happening during a time when Ashland is filled with tourists who have an obvious interest in Shakespeare. What a great opportunity to invite those people to come and learn about who we are, and pass out membership brochures to the attendees. It is very exciting!

BM: And what about the SOF annual conference scheduled for Hartford in October (see article, page 13)?

SS: That is also very exciting. On top of the conference being held at such a great location for marketing – the Mark Twain House – the board has committed to scheduling at least one event or presentation each day of the conference that will be open to the public. That will make it so much easier to promote our being there. In addition to our active media campaign leading up to the conference, I will be visiting the Hartford area a few weeks before the conference to advance the events and activities we have scheduled. I will make personal contact with media outlets, educators, and community leaders to make sure that the Hartford region knows the top SAQ scholars in the world are about to converge in Connecticut.

BM: Who is responsible for deciding the focus of these PR campaigns?

SS: One of my duties is to advise the board on things such as strategy, timing and format. They take my advice under consideration, and then they direct my efforts within the scope of available time and resources. One of the things we are going to need to focus on, now that we are moving full speed forward, is our timing. We have to time the release of everything, and coordinate the release of everything with everything else. When we know we are having a major event or publication announced, we need to plan accordingly. One of my next projects is to assist the board with developing a PR calendar for the coming year, so that we can maximize the impact of each item we release. We have to be sure that we release things when they are truly ready to be announced, and be cautious not to overwhelm our media outlets with too much information at one time.

BM: What about the new SOF podcast you are working on? How does that connect to your mission for the SOF?

SS: The podcast is definitely a great addition to our PR campaign, but the focus of the podcast is quite different from the focus of the PR campaign as a whole. Our overall marketing campaign is focused on generating publicity for the organization, its overall mission, and its available resources for those who are interested in the SAQ and Oxfordianism; the podcast is one of those resources. It is designed to generate interest and discussion in the SAQ and Oxfordianism, while also providing a forum for our experts to share their research and knowledge. Some of the episodes are panel discussions we recorded at the Oakland conference, but new episodes will be very much like a talk show format, where I will interview guests on the air about their particular areas of expertise.

BM: Who is the target audience for the podcast series?

SS: Though I know our members will enjoy the series, everyone has to remember that the target audience of the series is listeners who don't know very much about the SAQ, but are curious to learn more. This gives those curious people—many of them younger people—a format that is easily accessible to them. This is important, because a great majority of the ground-level reporters in newsrooms across the country are younger people who are more open to the SAQ, but want to access information in a way they are used to.

BM: How will you measure your success?

SS: I am very encouraged by the success we are already experiencing, and I'm going to do all that I can within the constraints of available resources. But ultimately, when it comes right down to it, success can only be measured one Oxfordian at a time.

(Bob Meyers is a journalist who edits the "How I Became an Oxfordian" series for the SOF website.)



Steven Sabel

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