



The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter



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NEW SOUTHAMPTON POEM SHAKES UP AUTHORSHIP DEBATE

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This winter the literary world learned of “To Queen Elizabeth,” a newly discovered 74-line poem by Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton. Its discovery was reported in the winter 2011 edition of *English Literary Renaissance* by Lara M. Crowley, Assistant Professor of English at Texas Tech University. For the text, see page 4 below.

The poem resonates particularly with Oxfordians, who have variously found in it evidence for Edward de Vere’s authorship of the plays and, more controversially, support for the so-called Prince Tudor hypothesis. Advanced in the USA perhaps most notably by actor-scholar and Oxfordian stalwart Hank Whittemore, and in England by Oxford’s relative, Charles Beauclerk, whose *Shakespeare’s Lost Kingdom* (2010) has been well received, PT Theory asserts that Southampton was the bastard child of Queen Elizabeth I and de Vere, the seventeenth earl of Oxford. In other words, Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth had a son with a claim to succeed his mother when she died in 1603.

It is largely thanks to Mr Whittemore, who recently featured Southampton’s poem on his popular blog (<http://hankwhittemore.wordpress.com/>), that the current newsletter devotes the space it does to discussing the new evidence and assessing its relevance to both Oxfordianism and the broader Shakespeare authorship question. Mindful of the intensity the debate generates, we are throwing our pages open to all sides and invite interested minds to contribute their ideas. The current issue features statements by Hank Whittemore, for the PT thesis, and John Hamill, immediate past president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, against. The Newsletter doesn’t imagine that the debate will be resolved any time soon. But we believe it is a debate Oxfordians need to have.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Roe's *Shakespeare Guide to Italy*

Dear Editor:

It was with great pleasure that I read the review of my father's book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* in the Winter 2012 *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*. I was kindly made aware of the complimentary and comprehensive review by two Oxfordians, one of whom generously sent me their hard copy.

Dad would have been very pleased by the excellent reception of his *magnum opus* by the SOS, an august body whose opinion was of prime importance to him—and he would have particularly relished the reviewer's use of the word “game-changer” in reference to his book.

The good news is that my father, before his death on December 1, 2010, held his completed 20-plus-year-old “baby” in his hands; that he celebrated the event with a ‘fun’ party hosted by his dear friend, Barbara Crowley (and her family) on a beautiful Spring day in Pasadena, California; that he received many well-deserved accolades from friends and fans from far and wide; and finally, that he was aware that his book was to be published by a respected American publishing house.

The sad news is, of course, that Dad did not live to enjoy—and react to—public reception of *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*. Regarding his book, my father said to me, “I will either be attacked, or ignored... probably ignored.” So I am always terribly pleased when he is not.

With kind regards,

Hilary Roe Metternich

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German Oxfordians Score Major Coup Against German Stratfordians

Dear Editor:

I'm pleased to announce that I have learned from Hanno Wember, co-chairman of the Oxfordian Neue Shakespeare Gesellschaft (NSG) that the NSG has scored a major victory against the Stratfordian Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft (DSG).

In brief, in an effort to discredit the film *Anonymous*, and thereby Oxfordians and Oxfordianism, the DSG sponsored an essay contest last year to identify historical inaccuracies in the film. Since anyone could enter, the Oxfordians, with Robert Detobel in the lead, collaborated on an essay of their own, which was submitted in the name of one of its lesser-known Oxfordian collaborators, who was open about having collaborated. The NSG essay won First Prize!

An announcement, with a link to the essay in German (a list of 49 historical errors), was recently posted on the DSG website home page, as they had promised to do when announcing the contest.

Congratulations to Hanno, Robert Detobel

and everyone in the NSG who participated in this brilliant maneuver. Perhaps for the first time, orthodox Shakespeare scholars have acknowledged the quality of the work of Oxfordians. That's quite an accomplishment for the NSG, which was just recently created, but has already done great work. I'm sure that Oxfordians everywhere join me in thanking them.

John Shahan

Hanno Wember adds: The DSG kept its promise and posted our paper on its homepage, but six weeks late. We had already told our story on our webpage, and this in an English version as well: http://shake-speare-today.de/front_content.php?idart=691

In a letter to the DSG Board we informed them of what really was going on. And surprisingly enough, one member, Prof. Werner Broennimann of the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, responded (in translation): "A coup! One has to congratulate. In Austria it is called a *Schmäh* [no translation possible!]. Even Hoax is not very far. But who is here the Trojan and who is the Greek [both in German feminine form]?"



**The Pasadena
Shakespeare Authorship
Conference
October 18-21, 2012**

**Courtyard Pasadena
Old Town by Marriott
180 North Fair Oaks Avenue
Pasadena, California 91103**

**Reservations: 888 236 2427
Conference Updates:
www.shakespeare-oxford.com**

'The Earl of Southampton Prisoner, and Condemned, To Queen Elizabeth'

Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton

Not to live more at ease (Dear Prince) of
thee
But with new merits, I beg liberty
To cancel old offenses; let grace so
(As oil all liquor else will overflow)
Swim above all my crimes. In lawn, a stain
Well taken forth may be made serve again.
Perseverance in ill is all the ill. The horses may,
That stumbled in the morn, go well all day.
If faults were not, how could great Princes then
Approach so near God, in pardoning men?
Wisdom and valor, common men have known,
But only mercy is the Prince's own.
Mercy's an antidote to justice, and will,
Like a true blood-stone, keep their bleeding still.
Where faults weigh down the scale, one grain of
this
Will make it wise, until the beam it kiss.
Had I the leprosy of Naaman,
Your mercy hath the same effects as Jordan.*
While I yet breathe, and sense and motion have
(For this a prison differs from a grave),
Prisons are living men's tombs, who there go
As one may, sith say the dead walk so.
There I am buried quick: hence one may draw
I am religious because dead in law.
One of the old Anchorites, by me may be ex-
pressed:

A vial hath more room laid in a chest:
Prisoners condemned, like fish within shells lie
Cleaving to walls, which when they're opened,
die:
So they, when taken forth, unless a pardon
(As a worm takes a bullet from a gun)
Take them from thence, and so deceive the
sprights
Of people, curious after rueful sights.
Sorrow, such ruins, as where a flood hath been
On all my parts afflicted, hath been seen:
My face which grief plowed, and mine eyes
when they
Stand full like two nine-holes, where at boys
play
And so their fires went out like Iron hot
And put into the forge, and then is not
And in the wrinkles of my cheeks, tears lie
Like furrows filled with rain, and no more dry:
Mine arms like hammers to an anvil go
Upon my breast: now lamed with beating so
Is like to get his own: or then a pit
With shovels emptied, and hath spoons to fill it.
And so sleep visits me, when night's half spent.
As one, that means nothing but [compliment]
Like one, whose stock being spent give over
trade.
I've left my going since my legs' strength de-
cayed.
Without such intermission they want power.
Stand as clock-hammers, which strike once
an hour

* Naaman the Leper was miraculously cured by
bathing in the River Jordan (2 Kings 5).

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And I with eating do no more ingross
Than one that plays small game after great loss.
Horror and fear, like cold in ice, dwell here;
And hope (like lightning) gone ere it appear:
With less than half these miseries, a man
Might have twice shot the Straits of Magellan.
Better go ten such voyages than once offend
The Majesty of a Prince, where all things end
And begin: why whose sacred prerogative
He as he list, we as we ought live.

All mankind lives to serve a few: the throne
(To which all bow) is [hewed] to by each one.
Life, which I now beg, wer't to proceed
From else whoso'er, I'd first choose to bleed
But now, the cause, why life I do Implore
Is that I think you worthy to give more.
The light of your countenance, and that same
Morning of the Court favor, where at all aim,
Vouchsafe unto me, and be moved by my
groans,
For my tears have already worn these stones.



**Lord Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl
of Southampton, in the Tower of
London, ca. 1602**



Queen Elizabeth I, ca. 1602

Southampton Poem Proves Oxford, 'Prince Tudor' Hypotheses

Hank Whittemore

Written February-March 1601, when the earl of Southampton was in the Tower facing execution for his role in the Essex Rebellion, "To Queen Elizabeth" contains clear echoes of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1609) and even some of the plays.*

In addition, Southampton's verse-epistle brings crucial elements of Oxfordian theory into focus. Among them is that Sonnet 107 was written by Oxford to celebrate Southampton's release, "supposed as forfeit to a confined doom," after the death of Elizabeth ("the mortal Moon") and the succession of James I in 1603. In it we find some familiar elements, among them Southampton's death sentence by a tribunal headed by Oxford, and his dire situation in the Tower. The fact that "To Queen Elizabeth" plainly echoes Shakespeare's sonnets, supports the hypothesis that Henry Wriothesley was indeed Mr W.H., dedicatee of the Sonnets.

These alignments highlight the importance of Southampton and the Sonnets to any theory of the Shakespeare authorship. In addition, it supports the argument (set forth in my *The Monument*, 2005) that the central "story" in the Sonnets occurs during Southampton's imprisonment and is related to the succession question, his liberation and Eliza-

beth's funeral. Sonnet 125 marks the official end of the "Tudor Rose" dynasty, the preservation of which—"That beauty's Rose might never die"—is announced as a goal in the very first sonnet.

Verbal Parallels

Southampton's poem reflects the writings of both Oxford and "Shakespeare." Perhaps the most notable is his plea for mercy, directly recalling Portia's famous speech in *The Merchant of Venice*:

If faults were not, how could great Princes then
Approach so near God, in pardoning men?
Wisdom and valor, common men have known,
But only mercy is the Prince's own.
Mercy is an antidote to justice...

Only when a
Queen tempers
lawful rigor with
"mercy" does she
truly become
God's represen-
tative. This is the

same as Oxford's meaning when he wrote to Robert Cecil on May 7, 1603, referring to James: "Nothing adorns a King more than justice, nor in anything doth a King more resemble God than in justice."

In her article, Lara Crowley wonders why Elizabeth "surprisingly" spared Southampton. "Why did the Queen change her mind?" she asks, suggesting that "a more practiced poet," such as Shakespeare, may have "composed the verses for Southampton to offer Elizabeth as his own."

These alignments highlight the importance of Southampton and the Sonnets to any theory of the Shakespeare authorship.

* The poem was discovered by Prof. Lara Crowley and first published by her in *English Literary Renaissance*, Winter, 2011

When we come to the sonnets, we again find many similar words or phrases, including “faults...great Princes...God...pardon...wisdom...common...mercy...just.”

In his *Commentaries on the Law in Shakespeare* (1911), Edward J. White notes that, in the “dark lady” series, Sonnet 134 “clearly refers to the confinement of Southampton in the Tower,” adding that the previous sonnet, 133, “expresses the Poet’s desire to be permitted to go [Southampton’s] bail, by substituting his own person for that of his friend, in jail.” White quotes Sonnet 133:

Prison my heart in thy steel bosom’s ward,
But then my friend’s heart let my poor heart
bail;
Who ere keeps me, let my heart be his guard,
Thou canst not then use rigor in my Jail.

The sonnet goes on to plead with the Dark Lady to use a less-strict form of justice. Stephen Booth adds, in his commentary on the same sonnet:

“Rigor,” a legal term, was common in phrases like “rigor of the law,” meaning strict enforcement of a law.

If Oxford were the author, he chose to adopt the pen name on the dedications to Southampton of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), publicly declaring in the latter: “The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end.” A central topic, then, is the “Shake-speare”-Oxford-Southampton relationship, which appears to be recorded in the Sonnets.

Southampton and the Sonnets

When Nathan Drake in 1817 suggested Southampton was the “fair youth” of the Sonnets, the traditional conception of the author suffered a major blow. Once the poet was seen as addressing a young peer in per-

sonal terms, the irrational belief in Will of Stratford as writer became obvious: he could never address a nobleman that way. Drake’s identification may have been the most powerful force propelling the authorship debate in the 19th century.

When J. Thomas Looney in 1920 identified Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford, as the true author of the plays, some proponents sought to determine the Oxford-Southampton relationship as expressed in the Sonnets. Since Oxford was 23 years older, a father-son bond became possible for the first time.

Inevitably some began to explore the possibility that Southampton was Oxford’s son by the Queen—Oxford had been extremely close to her in the early 1570’s, when the younger earl was born—and soon they began to view the Sonnets as possibly depicting a Tudor heir by blood.

Indications of a father-son bond include Oxford begging him in Sonnet 10: “Make thee another self for love of me,” while signs of him writing to his royal son include his prediction in Sonnet 17 that “your true rights” will be seen by future readers as merely “a Poet’s rage.”

Oxfordians have generally preferred the traditional paradigm of an author writing to his friend or lover. Viewing Oxford as “Shakespeare,” however, already demands a radical transformation of the old paradigm—from the Stratford commoner to the high-born nobleman with close ties to the monarch. Given such a profound reversal, we should not be surprised to find that flowing from it are other perceptions needing an overhaul as well.

Here are some propositions that not only challenge common assumptions but also, in my view, must be recognized before the Oxfordian movement can gain public acceptance:

1. The Sonnets preserve the truth of Shakespeare authorship.

Many Oxfordians still assume that the 154 consecutively numbered sonnets represent a haphazard compilation of poems that the publisher, Thomas Thorpe, randomly selected, so their arrangement can be dismissed as irrelevant. A demonstrable fact, however, is that the “authorship question” is addressed in the Sonnets by the author himself. When Oxford adopted “Shakespeare” as a pen name, he most likely expected to be identified after his death, as was customary; but it appears that later he used the personal sonnets to record his acceptance of posthumous obliteration:

My name be buried where my body is
And live no more to shame nor me nor you
—Sonnet 72

Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I (once gone) to all the world must die
—Sonnet 81

2. Oxford links his obliteration to Southampton’s fame.

Southampton plays an inextricable role in this “permanent” obliteration, and this linkage is clear when the above lines are placed in context. In Sonnets 72 and 81 the two themes are joined: Oxford’s name will disappear, but Southampton will flourish (72). Southampton’s name will live, but Oxford’s must vanish (81).

The clear implication is that Oxford ultimately fashioned the sonnet sequence to leave behind this story of his authorship being eliminated from the record—a true story in which he sacrifices his own identity as “Shakespeare” in return for a promise that Southampton will not only retain his honor among men but also remain in history as the one individual to whom the great author publicly pledged his love and devotion.

These themes are right there in the personal sonnets, but Oxfordian theorists have never joined to articulate them.

3. The “rival poet” is Oxford’s pen name, “Shakespeare”

Proposing to replace Will of Stratford with the Lord Great Chamberlain of England, the Oxfordian theory virtually demands that basic conceptions of the Sonnets be turned inside-out. Among these ideas is that Sonnets 78-86 comprise a “rival poet” series.

Within the Stratfordian view it is perhaps natural to assume that “Shakespeare” felt threatened by a “better” poet who also successfully stole Southampton’s affections. This fellow might have been some other writer such as Chapman or Nashe or Daniel, but his identity has remained unknown. The reason, I submit, is that no such flesh-and-blood rival ever existed in the first place.

Proponents of Oxford reflexively continue the tradition of the “rival poet” by adding other candidates, such as Sir Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Essex. I predict that this carry-over from the Stratfordian view will eventually be recognized as nonsensical. The Oxfordian theory already envisions a man leading two lives—one nearly invisible, as himself, and the other one public, as the printed name “Shakespeare,” offering his only competition. Oxford refers to himself in the private sonnets as “I” in relation to this “better spirit” who uses Southampton’s name on the dedications to him of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), with all subsequent editions carrying the same epistles. He writes of this public alter ego, telling Southampton:

O How I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might

To make me tongue-tied speaking of your fame
—Sonnet 80

Oxford in Sonnet 66 has already complained that his “art” or writing has been “made tongue-tied by authority” or official decree. Now we learn that the “better spirit” invoking Southampton’s name and praising him is also keeping Oxford “tongue-tied.” Whoever wields “authority” is now forcing Oxford to use his own pen name “Shakespeare” as a means of rendering him speechless. He can speak publicly of the younger earl only from behind the mask.

The so-called rival series continues with the previously mentioned Sonnet 81 and its promise to Southampton of “immortal life” while Oxford, once gone, must “die” to the world. He follows those lines with another *quid pro quo*:

The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men’s eyes shall lie
—Sonnet 81

The very next verse contains a beautifully compressed description of his public dedications to Southampton as the “fair youth”:

The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book
—Sonnet 82

The traditional “rival” series is clearly Oxford’s poetical and deeply emotional expression of grief over having to disassociate himself from Southampton while his own pseudonym, which he linked uniquely to the younger earl, gets all the credit for giving him eternal fame. In this single great series of sonnets, like the sweeping movement of a musical score, Oxford dramatizes the Shakespeare authorship question with stunning eloquence and power, indicating the mask is now glued to his face, smothering him:

Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
—Sonnet 86

When Southampton became the only one ever to be connected to “Shakespeare’s” dedicatory lines, Oxford lost his own substance and ability to speak as himself:

But when your countenance filled up his line,
Then lacked I matter, that enfeebled mine
—Sonnet 86

4. The Dark Lady is Elizabeth

One of the most sensitive concepts involving the Sonnets is also a carry-over from Stratfordian tradition: that of the “dark lady” as the author’s mistress who lures Southampton into a sexual affair with her. I predict this conception also will be viewed one day as comically absurd. Once more we have a list of candidates: Lucy Negro, Mary Fitton, Emilia Bassano Lanier (shared by Stratfordians and Oxfordians alike!), Anne Vavasour and even Oxford’s second wife Elizabeth Trentham. The idea is that this “dark mistress” drives Oxford into a state of near madness:

Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
And frantic mad with evermore unrest;
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen’s are,
At random from the truth, vainly expressed:
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art black as hell, as dark as night.
—Sonnet 147

Clearly her blackness is metaphorical; there is no evidence that Oxford had a mistress who went off with Southampton. Many Oxfordians have irrationally accepted yet another Stratfordian interpretation, this time viewing the relationship of Oxford, Southampton and the “dark lady” as a romantic-sexual triangle. No such story can be found

in the documentary record. Once again, although the Oxfordian theory offers an entirely new paradigm, proponents of it keep clinging to illusory concepts of the old one.

Perhaps the most popular Oxfordian “dark lady” is Anne Vavasour, whose illegitimate son by Oxford becomes the “fair youth” of some (but not all) the sonnets to the younger man. This hypothesis, put forth in 1941 by Charles Wisner Barrell, proposes not one but two fair youths, one of whom is still the Earl of Southampton. This proposition, another example of the contortions to which a mistaken hypothesis can lead, also lacks documentary evidence; nonetheless it is notable for Barrell’s suggestion that Oxford wrote a portion of the sonnets as a devoted father to his beloved son, as when discussing lines such as these:

Even for this let us divided live
And our dear love lose name of single one
—Sonnet 36

“It would be difficult,” Barrell wrote, “to find clearer expression of a heartbroken father’s renunciation of the open pride of parenthood in a charming and worthy son born out of wedlock.”

Barrell perceives in the Sonnets that “the poet’s mistress (is) obviously the boy’s mother,” which inadvertently offers support to the “Prince Tudor” theory that the Queen was Southampton’s mother. In fact the only woman to whom both Oxford and Southampton were tied, and upon whom they both depended, was Elizabeth. Both earls had pledged their devotion to her, and after the failed Essex Rebellion she did steal Southampton, by keeping him in her prison, as expressed in the “dark lady” series:

Me from my self thy cruel eye hath taken,
And my next self thou harder hast engrossed
—Sonnet 133

As we’ve seen, the Queen and her Tudor Rose dynasty are evoked by “beauty’s Rose” in Sonnet 1; she is the prince in the phrase “great Princes” of Sonnet 25; she is recognized by most critics as “the mortal Moon” of Sonnet 107; Oxford in Sonnet 149 is “commanded by the motion of thine eyes,” which he would write only to his monarch; and in the “Bath” epilogue, Sonnets 153-154, she is evoked by phrases such as “sovereign cure” and “fairest Votary” and “Virgin hand.”

5. Oxford’s story for posterity is “all one, ever the same”

A researcher in 1859 suggested that Southampton’s motto, “One for All, All for One,” appears in various forms throughout the sequence, such as in Sonnet 8: “Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing,” or in Sonnet 31: “And thou, all they, hast all the all of me,” or in Sonnet 105, when he proclaims that “all alike my songs and praises be/To one, of one, still such, and ever so.”

Despite the subsequent widespread agreement about the pervasive presence of Southampton’s motto, few commentators have noticed that in one line it immediately precedes the Queen’s motto, “Ever the Same”:

Why write I still all one, ever the same
—Sonnet 76

If Oxford is the author, he is referring to both Southampton and Elizabeth. He cannot write “ever the same” without deliberately indicating the Queen. A simple translation of that line would be: “In these sonnets I always write about Southampton and Elizabeth.” This story is told in the “fair youth” sonnets with some basic chronological markers:

Sonnets 1-17 (Early 1590's): These reflect Burghley's pressure on Southampton to marry Oxford's daughter Elizabeth Vere; the earl was still a royal ward, so the Queen was involved as his official mother.

Sonnet 26: The first "envoy," saluting "Lord of my love," brings the first series to its end.

Sonnet 107 (April 10, 1603): The "dating" sonnet, celebrates the liberation of Southampton on April 10 following Elizabeth's death and the proclaiming of James a few weeks earlier.

Sonnet 125 (April 28, 1603): Looney suggested Sonnet 125 as coinciding with the Queen's funeral procession; and it would seem no coincidence that 19 sonnets match the 19 days from Southampton's release on April 10 to Elizabeth's funeral on the 28th.

Sonnet 126: The second "envoy," bidding farewell to "my lovely Boy," concludes the real-life story of Southampton in relation to Elizabeth, who has become "sovereign mistress over wrack."

So the recorded events span about a dozen years from the early 1590's to 1603.

To sum up a theme: There have been many candidates for the "fair youth," "dark lady" and "rival poet," but behind these fictional labels of tradition are the real-life individuals Southampton and Elizabeth plus "Shakespeare," the mask now being used to hide Oxford's identity forever.

6. The center of the story is a "century" of sonnets at the center

The orthodox scholar Edgar Fripp observed in *Shakespeare, Man and Artist* (1938) the rather obvious fact that the 100-sonnet sequence after the first "envoy," Sonnet 26, is a "century" of sonnets. Noting that "Shake-

speare's Sonnets 27-126 are a century," he also suggested that the 100-sonnet sequence called *The Hekatompathia or Passionate Century of Love* (1582) by Thomas Watson, "may have served as a model for Shakespeare's century of sonnets."

Given that Watson had dedicated his "century of passions [sonnets]" to Oxford, thanking the earl for his help with the manuscript, it seems that Fripp was on the right track!

The century inserted by "Shakespeare" is positioned between the two shorter series, Sonnets 1-26 and Sonnets 127-152, each containing 26 verses. This structure is far from accidental. The century is the center of the "monument" of the Sonnets; by deliberate design, serving as a guide, it is also the center of the story.

7. Oxford's "century" records his sacrifice of identity for Southampton

Gerald Massey noted in 1866 an abrupt transition from Sonnet 26 to Sonnet 27: "Suddenly we are all adrift, because the spirit of the verses so obviously changes."

I suggested in *The Monument* that Sonnet 27 begins Oxford's record of how he sacrificed his identity to "Shakespeare" to save Southampton from execution and gain the promise of his liberation with a pardon by King James. On a parallel track, he addresses Elizabeth in the "dark lady" series that begins with Sonnet 127. The recently discovered poem Southampton wrote to her from the Tower, pleading for mercy, is echoed by Oxford's relief at news of a reprieve for the younger earl:

Straight in her heart did mercy come
—Sonnet 145

Within this framework there can be neither a bisexual triangle involving a dark "mistress" nor any rival poet praising Southamp-

ton and stealing his affections. Rather than presenting a chaotic story uncorroborated by contemporary history, the newer picture is simple and clear as well as supported by recorded events leading to the succession. And there is evidence that Oxford, as part of an infamous bargain with Robert Cecil, helped to prepare for the peaceful transfer of power to James.

The next question to be answered, then, is why Oxford agreed to bury his identity to save Southampton? Why did he value Southampton to such an extent? What made Southampton so special to him? Why would Oxford promise the younger earl “immortal life”?

And why would Cecil and James want to gain Oxford’s permanent silence?

The Prince Tudor theory offers the only persuasive explanation. The existence of a natural issue of the Queen’s body (“legitimate” or not) would have posed an even greater threat of civil war around the throne; and surely it would have frightened the easily terrified King James of Scotland, whose birth on foreign soil made him technically ineligible to wear the English crown.

Perhaps the man behind the mask of “Shakespeare” did have a kind of power, after all—at least enough power to force Cecil into keeping Southampton alive in the Tower, albeit as a hostage.

“Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter,” Oxford wrote to Southampton in

Sonnet 87, adding to the younger earl, “In sleep a King, but waking no such matter.” Was this just “a Poet’s rage”? I think not.

It is time for the Oxfordian movement to accept that the Sonnets comprise the most

potent evidence in the authorship debate; but this is true only when Oxford’s testimony in the Sonnets is no longer viewed through the Stratfordian lens. Oxfordians have been trapped between two paradigms, the old one of William Shakspeare and the new one of Edward de Vere.

Is the “shame” and “disgrace” suffered by Oxford in the Sonnets because of a homosexual affair with Southampton? Of course not; that explanation is a holdover from the traditional view, which has never had the slightest historical foundation.

Oxford was being held hostage along with Southampton; it is time to realize that he suffered “shame” and “disgrace” for having failed to help the younger earl (yes, perhaps even having failed to help his son become Henry IX of England). He and Southampton were both captives, forced into serving the all-powerful Cecils. In the end it is a case of good versus evil, as he admits: “And captive good attending Captain ill” (Sonnet 66).

Which is as much to say, “And Southampton and I, both captives, are forced into serving Secretary Cecil.”



Princess Elizabeth, ca. 1546

'To Queen Elizabeth' Just a Plea for Mercy

John Hamill

Southampton's *To Queen Elizabeth*, has been interpreted as supporting the Oxfordian argument and the Prince Tudor theory. But it supports neither one, and appears to be simply a plea for mercy by someone condemned to death. It seems to have been written while Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, was in prison 1601-3, awaiting execution for his role in the Essex Rebellion.

At the end of their trial on February 19, 1601, Essex and Southampton were sentenced to be publicly hanged, disemboweled, and quartered on Tower or Traitor's Hill. This was the most disgraceful and horrific death sentence possible: a warning to all traitors. But on February 25, Essex was given a more merciful death—a private beheading at the Tower of London. Southampton's sentence was held in abeyance, but he remained in prison. As Chiljan writes (p. 298):

Southampton's status circa June 1601 was indicated on Cecil's list of those implicated in the rebellion, his name appearing under the category, 'Persons living that are condemned.'

Yet this poem is now interpreted as supporting the argument that Southampton was the son of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and Queen Elizabeth, and that the central "story" in the Sonnets occurs during Southampton's imprisonment and is related to the succession question. If Southampton were the queen's son, he would have a claim on her throne.

That Southampton was the Fair Youth of the Sonnets is not the question here. Most

scholars accept this proposition. Southampton's poem can be linked to Sonnet 107, the so called "dating sonnet," which seems to reflect his incarceration and liberation in 1603. But his request for mercy adds little to what we already know, except that he wrote a poem to the Queen, and for many that is very exciting and significant by itself.

Prince Tudor

Whittemore's interpretation of the poem rises to unparalleled speculation. A simple request for clemency is used to again present his case for the Prince Tudor theory. And again he provides no satisfactory confirmation. On the contrary, all the evidence we have contradicts the Prince Tudor theory. No such story can be found in the documentary record. Many Oxfordians have irrationally accepted this theory, largely, it seems, to avoid the bisexual character of the Sonnets, and reject the relationship of Oxford, Southampton and the Dark Lady as a romantic-bisexual triangle.

Southampton's poem offers nothing to support Whittemore's speculation that the earl was the Queen's son by Oxford and thus heir to the Tudor throne, nor that the rival poet was Oxford himself, and the Dark Lady the Queen.

Sex

What is missing from Whittemore's analysis is a discussion of the overall sexual nature of the Sonnets. Edward de Vere was most likely bisexual. The author's bisexuality is the one issue that most scholars and researchers, aside from Joseph Sobran and Richard Waugaman, have largely omitted from his bio-

graphy. Since the Stratford man's life does not indicate any bisexuality, scholars do not know how to interpret the many bisexual allusions present in the works of "Shakespeare." As Maurice Charney notes,

The issues of the homoerotic in Shakespeare are hopelessly entwined in academic controversy. Everything seems to come back to the unanswerable question of Shakespeare's own sexual orientation. (159)

With Oxford as Shakespeare, "the question" is no longer unanswerable.

Similarly, most authorship doubters do not recognize Oxford's bisexuality. The result has been an intellectual impasse in which each side has been trying to solve the puzzle with only half of the pieces at hand. Joseph Sobran, in his *Alias Shakespeare* (1997), was not the first to point out Shakespeare's homoeroticism, but he was the first to connect it to apparent homosexual behavior in the biography of the Earl of Oxford. Yet despite Sobran, few Oxfordians seem to understand either its importance or how it supports Oxford's case for the authorship.

The evidence we have suggests that both Oxford and Southampton were bisexual. But there is general silence about the presence of bisexuality in the works of "Shakespeare" and the life of Oxford as a significant reason why there was a need for an alias. In fact, in the recent plethora of authorship books, not one accepts or addresses this issue. How can one write a comprehensive biography without discussing the complete sexual orientation of the subject and how this influenced his work? Only Oxford's heterosexuality is presented by most researchers and scholars. Indeed, Looney himself identifies Shakespeare's "doubtful and somewhat conflicted attitude to woman," as one of the characteristics of the author, and that this "one characteristic

might afford an explanation for the very existence of the Shakespeare mystery." This is as close as Looney could get to the subject in 1920. Now that the need to protect Shakespeare from the "taint" of bisexuality is waning and no longer perceived as staining his reputation, the presence of bisexuality in the plays, poems, and sonnets has been recognized and more accepted.

The author of the Sonnets dwells on the emotional and sexual love of a young man and a libidinous woman, expressed through numerous creative puns and with such dexterity that much of the sexual imagery can be overlooked by the casual reader, although "Stephen Booth's ingenuity has revealed how charged these poems are—even the most idealistic ones—with sexual puns" (Smith, *Desire* 229). In some sonnets addressed directly to the fair youth, such as 52, the erotic punning is particularly intense:

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special blest,
By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.

Is there any question that sexual desire is expressed here? The Poet is so in love with the Fair Youth that no matter what he does, he will accept it gladly, since (as he puts it in 57) "so true a fool is love."

Sonnet 99 is also sweetly and exceptionally erotic. Here the Poet not only compares the parts of the Fair Youth's body to the wonders found in nature, in the usual way

that Renaissance sonnets describe a woman's body, but he goes further. The youth's body is not a copy of the sweetness, and the colors, and the smells found in nature. In a twist, nature instead has stolen them from him.

The homosexual consciousness of the first 126 sonnets is seen not merely in the celebrations of the young man's beauty, in the obsessiveness of the author's love, or even in his repeated attempts to define his relationship with the young man in terms of marriage ("So I shall live, supposing thou art true, like a deceived husband," Sonnet 93; "Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments," Sonnet 116), but also in his profound sense of being different (Sonnets 121 and 122).

Obsessive Desire

Many of the poems are immersed in expressions of obsessive desire and of grief in the Youth's absence. The author speaks of emotions that typically affect the lovesick: sleepless nights when the poet's thoughts make a pilgrimage to the beloved (Sonnets 27 and 61); mutual possession and shared identity (31, 36, 39, 42); the poet as a slave to his friend's desire (57); yearning and frustration (87); being deceived (93); sexual dependency (75); and again, marriage (93, 116).

Paul Ramsey concedes that the clause "Thy self thou gav'st" at 87.9, if said of a woman, "would certainly suggest consummation." Why should the identical clause take another meaning if the recipient is a man? (Pequigny *Love* 50).

Note also: "In the *Sonnets*, the young patron returns his poet's devotion" (Sams 107) and "The graphically physical love making in these poems is playfully encoded in puns, many of which are sustained throughout the entire sequence: "have" (52.14, 87.13, 110.9-12, 129.6), "use" (2.9,

4.7, 6.5, 20.14, 40.6, 48.3, 78.3, 134.10), "will" for male and female sexual organs as well as for sexual desire in general (57.13, 112.3, 134.2, 135, 136, 143.13, 154.9), and "pride" for penis (64.2, 52.12, 151.9-11)" (Smith *Desire* 252).

As Booth observes, the Boy is addressed, manifestly, in language that more often bespeaks cross-gender passion: these terms "appear in contexts that carefully, constantly, and ostentatiously echo the manner, diction and concerns of love poems about sexual relationships between men and women" (Sinfield 177). The sexual puns in the *Sonnets* are the same puns as in the plays. Why would they mean something different in the *Sonnets*?

In addition, Pequigny recounts how the *Sonnets* are filled with recurrent expressions of anxious sexual jealousy (*Love* 102-3). In Sonnets 33-35, the author reacts bitterly to the fact that the youth has had sexual relations with someone else, but when he begs for forgiveness, he is forgiven. Sonnets 40-42 refer to a sexual triangle between the Poet, the Youth and a Woman. In Sonnets 48, 49, 57, 58, 61, and 69 the author expresses anxiety over the youth's faithfulness. In Sonnets 78-86 the author relates his bitterness at the youth's attraction to a rival male poet. In Sonnets 87-96 he is haunted again by desire and frustration and fears of the youth's waning love and concern over potential scandal. Many of the sonnets reveal obsessive desire and grief over the boy's absence.

While the sexuality of the sonnets addressed to the Dark Lady is quite explicit and is not questioned, "the notion that such a relationship is implicit in the earlier group was for a long time anathema to admirers of Shakespeare" (Wells 60). The author is obsessed and conflicted by his attraction to both of his subjects, as Sonnet 144 confesses:

Two loves I have, of comfort and despair
Which like two spirits do suggest me still
The better angel is a man right fair
The worser spirit a woman colored ill

As John Berryman remarks, “One thing critics [who are] not themselves writers of poetry occasionally forget is that poetry is composed by actual human beings, and tracts of it are very closely about them. When Shakespeare wrote [in sonnet 144], ‘Two loves have I,’ reader, he was not kidding” (quoted in Giroux, 1982, 51). Marjorie Garber responds: “Amid all of these ingenious and enlightening critical maneuverings no one wants to comment on the obvious—that the sonnets describe a bisexual triangle” (514-515). These particular sonnets contain full expressions of sexual desire, jealousy, and lavish praise for the Fair Youth’s beauty. It is also on record that both Southampton and Oxford were accused of

homosexual conduct.* Is this referred to in the poet’s “outcast state” in the *Sonnets*?

Oxford returned to England from Italy with a Venetian choirboy, Orazio Cuoco, in tow—an event that later led enemies of the earl to accuse him of pederasty. In addition, most of the plays, especially *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Othello*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *As You Like It*, appear to have strong homosexual overtones. The author was clearly interested in bisexuality, as was Oxford. This factor by itself, homosexuality, may have been enough to require the alias that

was maintained by the de Veres well beyond the seventeenth earl’s death.

The Real Scandal

The Prince Tudor thesis is largely discredited among many if not most Oxfordians, yet remarkably, it became the basis of the movie *Anonymus*! No facts support the theory that the Queen had a bastard, or if she did, that it was Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton, and Oxford was the father. Yet PT theory still has a cult following of true believers.

The sonnets depict a love triangle involving the author, the Youth, and a “Dark Lady.” Evidence suggests she may have been Oxford’s second wife, Elizabeth Trentham. Other data suggest that Oxford’s son and heir, Henry de Vere, later the 18th earl,

was the bastard son of the Earl of Southampton and Elizabeth Trentham.* Here is a real scandal sufficient in itself for Oxford’s

The sonnets depict a love triangle involving the author, the Youth, and a “Dark Lady.” Evidence suggests she may have been Oxford’s second wife, Elizabeth Trentham.

authorship to have remained permanently concealed. These issues may provide the tie to why the alias formally emerged in 1593, the year Oxford’s son was born, and why the cover-up was maintained after his death.

Any one of these reasons, and certainly all of them in combination, would have provided sufficient motive for Oxford and his heirs to want to keep his authorship secret long-term.

The *Sonnets*, filled as they are with sexual puns that express bodily desire and reflect consummation, and which are replete with bitter sexual jealousy, do not reflect the lan-

* See my “Shakespeare’s Sexuality and how it affects the Authship debate,” *The Oxfordian* 8, 2005

* See Mark Anderson’s *Shakespeare By Another Name* and my 2005 article in the SOS Newsletter, “The Dark Lady and Her Bastard.”

guage or emotions in which one would address one's own son.

The Prince Tudor theory claims that the reason the sonnets are full of royal imagery, and consistently reference the youth as a Rose, is because the Fair Youth was the bastard son of the Queen, and the Rose the symbol of the Tudors. This claim is advanced as a major proof of the theory. However, no biographical or historical evidence is provided in corroboration. In fact, the available evidence refutes this scenario. Little suggests that the Queen was pregnant at any time, and even less that that her non-existent child was Southampton. There were baby rumors spread by Elizabeth's Catholic enemies, but they were never substantiated. The most famous example was Arthur Dudley, who claimed to be the son of the Queen by Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, at one time the Queen's favorite. Arthur eventually fled to Spain where the government made the most they could of his story. In the end, however, they let it drop.

The royal imagery in the sonnets can be more simply explained as a common lover's devotion, in which he says he is his lover's vassal and slave, and equates his love in the highest terms he can devise, as a love poem would be expected to do. There is no mystery here. References to the roses throughout the sonnets are not necessarily allusions to the Tudor Rose, but just as likely pun on Southampton's name, Wriothesley (which could have been pronounced *Rosely*). They

could also allude to the Southampton ancestral home at Titchfield, which displayed the coat of arms of the town of Southampton: three roses. In any case, interpreting the imagery in the *Sonnets* referring to the English crown and the Tudor Rose is not evidence that Southampton specifically was the fair youth, or that the fair youth may have been a bastard of the Queen.

The Catholic Problem

The date of Southampton's birth was not a matter of rumor and speculation. His three biographers, Stopes, Akrigg and Rowse, do not even raise it as a possibility. In addition, in an age of extreme religious intolerance, when the religion of the monarch, whether Protestant or Catholic, was paramount for the royal succession, why would the Protestant Queen Elizabeth allow Southampton, if he were her son and heir, to be raised a Catholic from birth, as Southampton was? It would have made no sense to place a secret royal bastard in the home of a recusant Catholic, like the second Earl of South-

ampton, who had been imprisoned for his disloyalty. Moreover in 1570 the Pope not only excommunicated Elizabeth but called for her assassination by English Catholics.

It must also be remembered that the third Earl of Southampton was released by King James from life imprisonment in the Tower. This was one of his first orders. If Southampton were a direct threat to James's claim to the English throne, why would he release him? James not only restored Southampton's titles and properties but added to them



Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, 1593 (?)

“A woman's face, with Nature's own hand painted.”

and made him a Knight of the Garter. These actions demonstrate that James had no concern that Southampton posed any kind of threat, or that he in any way considered that he had any claim to the throne. And this occurred just at King James's most insecure time, when, as a foreigner, a Scot, he became King of England. His first task was to secure his throne and squash any real or imagined opposition.

Essex was accused and found guilty of trying to murder Queen Elizabeth and take the throne. Southampton was tried and found guilty of being an accomplice, yet was never accused of planning to become King himself. It was not even brought up as a possibility, a significant fact that Prince Tudor advocates have failed to explain. Southampton's only defense was that he followed Essex and meant no harm to the Queen.

Summary

In the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), Peter Holland acknowledges that the "explicit homoeroticism [of the *Sonnets*] suggests that Shakespeare's sexuality was consciously bisexual in its desires." (952) As Harold Bloom asserts: "The human endowment, Shakespeare keeps intimating, is bisexual" (714).

Henry de Vere, Henry Wriothesley, Elizabeth Trentham, and their families, a strong closely-knit group allied by blood, marriage and politics, had the most to lose should Oxford be exposed as the author "Shakespeare." But they were in a unique position to safeguard the pseudonym, and prevent the scandal that could have destroyed the de Veres, Wriothesleys and Oxford's in-laws, the Herberts. If Oxford's son were a bastard, the pseudonym also protected the legitimacy of Henry de Vere as the Lord Great Chamberlain and the 18th

Earl of Oxford, the most prestigious earldom in the kingdom.

Southampton's poem to the Queen has been mistakenly interpreted by Whittemore. All the earl wanted was to receive Elizabeth's mercy. If she really were his mother, she failed to free him or make him her heir. He had to wait until her successor, James I, became King of England in order to be pardoned and restored to his earldom! There is not the slightest evidence that the Queen thought that Southampton was her child and possible heir. It is to the Prince Tudor theory that the phrase "comically absurd" is most aptly applied.

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Correction

The winter Newsletter incorrectly called London journalist Oliver Kamm *Oliver Kramm*. We apologize.

'Psalms' Help Confirm de Vere Was Shakespeare

Richard Waugaman

Stratfordians sometimes say the theory that Edward de Vere wrote Shakespeare's works lacks a single molecule or even atom of supporting evidence. Sigmund Freud, who founded my profession of psychoanalysis, strongly favored de Vere as Shakespeare, and this paper proposes a humble quark of evidence for Freud's heretical opinion.¹ Even if the paper fails to convince you that this quark is relevant to the authorship question, the paper's second goal is to introduce you to my project of mining a new source of biblical allusions in Shakespeare's works. These allusions stand on their own, aside from the authorship debate, and they help enrich our understanding of Shakespeare's multiple levels of meaning.

Roger Stritmatter's research on the Geneva Bible purchased by de Vere in 1569 showed a startling correlation between the respective levels of interest in specific passages by de Vere and by Shakespeare. Essentially, the more times Shakespeare alludes to a given verse, the greater the likelihood that the same verse is marked in de Vere's Bible. For example, de Vere marked only 13% of verses Shakespeare echoed just once, but 88% of verses Shakespeare echoed six times.

Sternhold and Hopkins's *Whole Book of Psalms* (WBP) is bound at the end of de Vere's Bible. Fourteen of the psalms are annotated with large, ornate, distinctive manicules (pointing hands). Three others are marked with a marginal bracket, flower, or large C, respectively. There are also five small manicules next to passages in Athanasius's *Treatise* on the psalms.

The psalms are set to music, and con-

stituted a popular Elizabethan hymnal. Only three or four minor echoes of that translation were tentatively noted by Naseeb Shaheen in his comprehensive collection of Shakespeare's biblical echoes. Yet, during the past four years, dozens of major allusions to WBP have turned up in Shakespeare's plays, Sonnets, and *The Rape of Lucrece*. It was de Vere's obvious interest in WBP that led me to search for these allusions.

To be sure, making a convincing argument for a given literary allusion in Shakespeare is no easy matter. There is always an irreducible degree of subjectivity in each reader's assessment of whether a given word or phrase does in fact constitute a specific biblical allusion on Shakespeare's part. Our underlying assumptions as to whether or not Shakespeare was significantly influenced by the Bible inevitably color our judgments about possible allusions. Rare words or uncommon phrases are naturally more convincing. The evidentiary value of WBP allusions is cumulative, and many such echoes have now been discovered.

Research on ten of the maniculed psalms led to a nine-page note in *Notes & Queries*.² It demonstrates allusions to those marked psalms in several Sonnets, in *Macbeth*, and in *The Rape of Lucrece*. A subsequent note in that journal shows echoes of several psalms in *1 Henry VI*.³ Four of these psalms—6, 8, 51, and 137—are marked in de Vere's copy. Further, that second note gives two examples of Shakespeare having used a marked psalm as a recurring *leitmotif* in a specific play. Psalm 137, "By the rivers of Babylon," is about the Israelites' Babylonian exile, and, as previously noted by Hannibal Hamlin, its echoes run throughout *Richard*

II, a play in which four characters are exiled.⁴

Early audiences heard psalm echoes to which later audiences became deaf.⁵ Their aesthetic experience would have been enriched as a result. In some cases, the allusion would register consciously. But even if it were more subliminal, it still could have influenced the audience's psychological reactions to a play.⁶ For example, the implicit comparison of exiled characters in *Richard II* with God's exiled Chosen People may have enhanced the audience's sympathy for those characters. The second note in *Notes & Queries* also shows that repeated echoes in *Edward III* of Psalm 103 (once again from the WBP translation) help support Shakespeare's authorship of that disputed play. *Titus Andronicus* repeatedly echoes Psalm 6, providing a biblical foundation for the play's theme of revenge, and problematizing the human usurpation of God's proper role in administering justice and revenge. Often, Shakespeare's psalm and other biblical echoes serve to underscore an ironic failure of the world of the play to conform to the biblical ideal with which it is implicitly contrasted.

Beth Quitslund has examined many early editions of WBP in preparing her new edition of it. After she had looked at some fifty early editions, she told me that de Vere's copy is unique in its extensive marginal annotations.⁷ This fact did not change her Stratfordian-authorship opinion. But I would suggest it is time that we question the long-standing taboo against even examining new evidence that challenges the traditional authorship assumption. The so-called "confirmation bias" distorts the way experts in any field assess new information, contributing to group-think. Without realizing it, we selectively attend to those new data that confirm our preconceptions; and we filter out, minimize, and explain away conflicting ob-

servations. Although not all the echoes of WBP in Shakespeare are to the psalms that are annotated in de Vere's copy, the majority of allusions discovered thus far are in fact to marked psalms.

The Sonnets cannot be fully understood without close study of their repeated echoes of the Psalms. Both contain overlapping themes—despair and consolation, Man's sinfulness and hopes for mercy, supplication and thanksgiving, and complaints about enemies and suffering.

Sonnet 28 and Psalm 77

Let me turn to an unpublished example of a psalm echo. The WBP 77 in de Vere's Bible is annotated with a prominent manicule at its first verse (where he nearly always placed them). I will discuss Psalm 77's influence on Sonnet 28, and then on *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare's despairing Sonnet 28 ("How can I then return in happy plight?") seems to reply to Psalm 77, whose 20 verses are divided into two parts of 10 verses each.

The psalm's Argument summarizes the first half as follows:

The prophet in the name of the church, reheareth the greatness of his affliction, and his grievous temptation...

It then summarizes the second half

...whereby he was driven to this end to consider his former conversation [spiritual being], and the continual course of God's works in the preservation of his servants: and so he confirmeth his faith against these temptations.

Sonnet 28 echoes words from both halves, but it lacks the consoling sentiments of the second half. Our awareness of this psalm-echo therefore sharpens the poignancy of the sonnet, as the comfort and hope of

its psalm model are all the more glaringly absent.

The second half of the psalm is organized around glorifying God for his might and mercy. The third quatrain of the sonnet faintly echoes this theme as it refers to efforts to “please” the Day, and “flatter” the night.⁸

The first two lines of the sonnet constitute a question; the first half of the psalm contains six questions. Nocturnal anguish is a prominent theme in both works. Helen Vendler writes that the sonnet “suggests that the young man himself is a...god”;⁹ the psalm is a supplication to God, with reminders of God’s past mercies. The 4th verse of the psalm is: “Thou holdest mine eyes always from rest,¹⁰ that I always awake: With fear am I so sore *oppressed*, my speech doth me forsake.” The fourth line of the sonnet is: “But *day by night* and *night by day oppressed*.” “*By night*” occurs twice in the psalm, in verses 2 and 6. The second line of the sonnet complains that the poet has no “benefit of rest.” Psalm 77:2 includes “*by night no rest I took*.” 77:1 includes the chiasmic “with heart and hearty cheer”; the fourth line of the sonnet includes the chiasmus of “day by night and night by day.” The second quatrain of the sonnet twice uses “toil” in the sense of “travel.” The psalm ends with an allusion to the paradigmatic journey of the Old Testament, the Israelites’ escape from oppression in Egypt through the Sea of Reeds: “Thou ledest thy folk upon the land, as sheep on every side:/ through Moses and through Aaron’s hand, thou didst them safely guide.”

The third quatrain of the sonnet includes “clouds do blot the heaven”; Psalm 77:17 has “clouds that were both thick and black.” I highlighted “black” because the third quatrain also includes “swart-complexioned night.” The psalm uses ‘strength’ twice to refer reassuringly to God’s great protective

The Psalmes of Dauid in Meeter.

Beatus vir. Psalmi. T.S.

This Psalm is set first as a preface, to exhort all godly men to studie and meditate the heavenly wisdom: for they be blessed that do so: but the wicked contemners thereof at length shall come to misery.



We man is blest that hath not
 bent, to wicked read his care: Nor led
 his life as stainers doe, nor late in sco-
 ners chaire. 2. But in the law of God
 the Lord, both set his whole delight:
 And in that law both exercise himselve
 both day and night.

3 We shall be like the tree that groweth
 fall by the rivers side:
 Which bringeth forth most pleasant fruit
 in her due time and tide.
 Whose leafe shall neuer fade nor fall,
 but flourish still and stand:
 When so all things shall prosper well
 that this man takes in hand.

**Psalm One, Sternhold and Hopkins’s
*Whole Book of Psalms***

might. The psalm’s echoes thus encourage us to search the sonnet for signs of the poet’s faith in God’s surrogate, the Fair Youth. But the sonnet ends with a poignantly contrasting use of “strength” to highlight the poet’s despair: “And *night* doth nightly make *grief’s strength*¹¹ seem stronger.” This ending draws attention to the beginning of the psalm (77:2)—“In time of *grief* I sought to God, by *night no rest* I

took.” That is, the problem of grief that the psalm resolves through reminders of God’s past goodness, remains unsolved, and even worse at the end of the sonnet.

Psalm 77 also has many words and sentiments that are echoed in *Hamlet*, especially in passages concerning the Ghost. Echoes of the first half of Psalm 77 reinforce Hamlet’s doubts about whether the Ghost is sent by God or by Satan, in Hamlet’s “tyme of grieffe” (77:2) over his father’s death. Verses 7-9 of Psalm 77 contain six questions that betray the psalmist’s profound doubts about God’s continuing mercy. Similarly, Harold Bloom cites Harry Levin’s observation that “*Hamlet* [is] a play obsessed with the word ‘question’...and with the questioning of the belief in ghosts and the code of revenge.”

We might think of the impact of the Ghost of King Hamlet in reading Psalm 77:4, “With *fear* am I so sore *opprest*, my speech doth me forsake.” In fact, Horatio tells Hamlet that Marcellus and Bernardo were struck dumb by the Ghost, who ‘walked / By their *oppress’d* and *fear*-surprised eyes/...whilst they.../ Stand dumb and speak not to him” (I.ii.202-206). Horatio also says “I have heard/ The cock...Doth... *Awake* the *god* of day, and at his warning, / Whether in *sea* or *fire*, in *earth* or *air*, / Th’ extravagant and erring *spirit* hies/ To his confine.”¹² (I.ii.149-155; the First Quarto wording is nearly identical). Psalm 77:17-19 uses some of these highlighted words to describe God’s awesome power—“The thunder in the *ayre* dyd crack...Thy thunder in the *fyre* was heard...the *earth* did quake ...Thy wayes within the *sea* doth lye.” (*Awake*, *god*, and *spirit* are also used elsewhere in Psalm 77.) Later in the play, Ophelia’s “I’ll *make an end* on’t” (IV.v.57) contrasts with 77:3’s “I...could not *make an end*.”¹³ The context of this phrase in the psalm is the “grief,” lack of “rest,” and lack

of “comfort” of the preceding verse. Ophelia’s allusion to these verses presages her suicide—making an “end” to her life. Further, Ophelia speaks these words as she interrupts her song, and 77:6 includes “my songs I call to mind.”

Shakespeare’s echoes of WBP serve many functions. The Psalter, as Sternhold put it, “comprehendeth the effecte of the whole Byble.” Shakespeare’s creative gifts (especially in the Sonnets) included his extraordinary skill in compressing a seemingly infinite world of meanings into verbal holograms. Echoing the already compressed psalms multiplies his meanings. Some might ask if Shakespeare’s fondness for WBP sheds light on the question of his religious preferences. However, our dichotomizing categories are often too narrow to capture Shakespeare’s complexity. Since the Psalms are the most personal book of the Bible, we can safely assume that they had compelling personal meaning for him.

In order to draw attention to WBP as a source for Shakespeare, I may have inadvertently created the false impression that I am claiming there are no other sources for the passages I cite. Of course there are. In recent decades, scholars have acknowledged the impressive breadth of Shakespeare’s reading. Shaheen worked under the assumption that a secular source, if available, would make it unlikely that the Bible served as Shakespeare’s source for the passage in question.¹⁴ Shaheen’s methodology thus embodies something of an anti-biblical bias. His method helps avoid making inaccurate attributions to biblical sources but also increases the likelihood of overlooking valid sources in the Bible. Shaheen is aware of the danger of projecting the scholar’s own religious beliefs onto Shakespeare. In our secular era, there is also the opposite danger of underestimating the extent to which Shake-

Shakespeare was influenced by the Bible and its Psalms.

In his history plays, these Psalm echoes hint at a providential interpretation of English history, subliminally comparing the English to the Israelites as God's Chosen People. Just as Caroline Spurgeon observed of his use of imagery,¹⁵ Shakespeare used both isolated psalm allusions; and also repeated allusions to one psalm, that sometimes contribute to the over-arching structure of one play. Shakespeare created multiple plot lines in all his plays to powerful "contrapuntal" effect, as one plot line echoes, contrasts with, or comments on another.

The many echoes of the Psalms in his Sonnets offer a similar sort of textual reverberation, expanding the Sonnets' extraordinary complexity.

Restoring readers' familiarity with the repeated allusions to the Psalms, offers a running

counterpoint to the words of the Sonnets, as the poet and his beloved are compared and contrasted with the psalmist and his God. Like the centuries of soot that obscured the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel until the 1980s, our unfamiliarity with WBP's echoes has deprived us of a richer enjoyment of Shakespeare's artistry.

Shakespeare's echoes of the Psalms illustrate the power of literary allusion, which Alter rightly calls "an essential modality of the language of literature."¹⁶ Shakespeare was so familiar with WBP that some of its echoes in his works probably reflect the associative process that was integral to his creative genius. He may not have been conscious of each allusion. As Shaheen puts it, "Shakespeare may have echoed Scripture without being aware of it, since the thought had become his own" (70). And not all of these allusions would have registered

consciously for every early modern reader or audience member. In fact, allusions to WBP often exemplify Alter's point that "a good deal of allusion is either meant to have or ends up having a subliminal effect" (121). Yet noticing and reflecting on them deepens our understanding of Shakespeare's creative method. These echoes also support Alter's argument that "The evoked text becomes a fundamental ground of reference for the alluding text" (124). In some instances, "the allusion is a key to the work not merely through strategic placement...but through being a recurrent thread in the formal design of the imaginative definition of character, theme, and world" (125).

As I wrote elsewhere, "the deposed King Richard's prison soliloquy offers an implicit

gloss on the psalm allusions throughout Shakespeare's work. Richard is meditating on the "still-breeding

thoughts" which people his prison cell—"The better sort [of thoughts], /As thoughts of things divine, are inter-mix'd/ With scruples and do set the word itself/ Against the word,/As thus: 'Come, little one,' and then again,/'It is as hard to come as for a camel/ To thread the postern of a small needle's eye'" (V.v.11-17).

Allusions to biblical words are not in fact always conclusive, since the Bible is open to contradictory interpretations. Ever complex, this is precisely how the thought-breeding Shakespeare uses his psalm allusions to people our minds with a multitude of meanings, to elevate language, and to keep us off balance so we do not lapse into false certainty" (*Notes & Queries*, 2010). I strongly encourage others to explore further the pervasive influence of WBP on Shakespeare's works. De Vere's copy of that psalm translation has, coincidentally or not,

Shakespeare was so familiar with WBP that some of its echoes in his works probably reflect the associative process that was integral to his creative genius.

led to the discovery of this splendid literary source.

Notes

This essay is based on a presentation made at the 2010 Southeastern Renaissance Conference at Davidson College. Its original title was, "An Oxfordian Quark, or a Quirky Oxfreudian? Psalm Evidence of de Vere's Authorship of Shakespeare's Works."

¹ I have also addressed this topic in "The Psychology of Shakespearean Biography." *Brief Chronicles*: (2009) [briefchronicles.com]; "A Psychoanalytic Study of Edward de Vere's *The Tempest*." *J. Amer. Academy of Psychoanalysis* (2009); (with Roger Stritmatter) "Who was 'William Shakespeare'? We Propose he was Edward de Vere." *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review* 32:105-115 (2009); and "The Bisexuality of Shakespeare's Sonnets and Implications for De Vere's Authorship." *The Psychoanalytic Review* 97:857-879 (2010).

² "The Sternhold and Hopkins Whole Book of Psalms Is a Major Source for the Works of Shakespeare." *Notes & Queries* 56:595-604 (2009);

³ "Echoes of the Whole Book of Psalms in Shakespeare's *I Henry VI*, *Richard II*, and *Edward III*." *Notes & Queries* 57:359-364 (2010).

⁴ My 2010 *Notes & Queries* article inexcusably ignored Hannibal Hamlin's prior discovery of Psalm 137's echoes in *Richard II* (see his *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature*). Hamlin was working with the Coverdale translation, whereas the WBP translation of this psalm provides additional echoed words.

⁵ For a modern example, think of the television series *Seinfeld*. Its episodes frequently spoof popular contemporary films. Watching these episodes years later, we may miss some of these allusions. But we may or may not realize that we are missing something.

⁶ See Richard M. Waugaman, "Unconscious Communication and Shakespeare: 'Et tu, Brute?' Echoes 'Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabbach-thani?'" *Psychiatry*, 70:52-58 (2007).

⁷ Personal communication, March 26, 2010.

⁸ "Day" is capitalized in the 1609 Quarto.

⁹ *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997, 157.

¹⁰ This verse seems to influence a line in Sonnet 27—"And keep my drooping eyelids open wide."

¹¹ Most editors emend the Quarto's "length" to "strength."

¹² Empedocles and many other philosophers described the basic elements as earth, air, fire, and *water*. The tetrad of earth, air, fire, and *sea* is much more unusual, and thus supports linking Horatio's words with Psalm 77.

¹³ Shaheen tentatively traces Hamlet's "The King is a thing...of nothing" (IV.ii.28-30) to the Coverdale Psalm 144:4—"Man is like a thing of nought." Shaheen overlooked a possibly better source in the WBP. Its (unmarked) Psalm 149:2 links "king" with "nothing" by rhyming them: "Let Israel rejoyce, in him, that made him *of nothing*! And let the sede of Sion eke, be joyful in theyr *king*." Hamlet tells Laertes before their duel, "Your skill shall like a star i' *th' darkest night*/ Stick fiery off indeed" (V.ii.256-57). This echoes one of the earliest uses of that phrase listed in *Early English Books Online* in a psalm marked by de Vere, 139:11—"Yea, if I say *the darknes*, shal, yet shroud me from thy sight:/Lo euen also *the darkest nyght*, about me shal be lyght." In both passages, "the darkest night" is a foil to set off the light. Robert Alter calls Psalm 139 "one of the most remarkably introspective" of all the Psalms. The passage Shakespeare echoes here describes the impossibility of hiding from God, which aptly presages Claudius's and Laertes's punishment for their concealed plot against Hamlet.

¹⁴ "If the passage in Shakespeare over which there is uncertainty also occurs in one of Shakespeare's sources...then we can reasonably conclude that Shakespeare was not making a biblical reference" (7).

¹⁵ Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).

¹⁶ *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, 111.

TOP TEN REASONS To Doubt that Shakespere Wrote ‘Shakespeare’

Matthew Cossolotto

10 Illiteracy ran in William of Stratford’s family, including his parents and wife. His two daughters were functionally illiterate, at best. Why would the greatest writer in English history, perhaps the greatest writer ever, raise illiterate children? Wouldn’t he want his own daughters to read his works?

9 No evidence exists that adequately explains how William of Stratford acquired the educational, linguistic and cultural background necessary to write the “Shakespeare” works. Where did his extensive knowledge of history, law, languages, geography, and aristocratic manners and lifestyle come from?

8 The few barely legible signatures of William of Stratford show that he did not even spell his own name “Shakespeare.” Moreover, his personal and business activities (birth, wedding, taxes, court documents, and will frequently spell his family name Shaksper, Shaksper, Shacksper, or Shaxper, whereas the name on the poems and plays is almost invariably spelled Shakespeare (with an “e” after the “k”, and often hyphenated) which suggests a pseudonym.

7 William of Stratford took no legal action against the pirating of the “Shake-speare” plays or the apparently unauthorized publication of “Shake-speare’s Sonnets” in 1609.

6 The 1609 Sonnets paint a portrait of the artist as a much older man. The author of the Sonnets at times is clearly aging and seems to be anticipating his imminent death. The publisher’s dedication refers to Shakespeare as “our ever-living poet”—a term that implies the poet was already dead. William of Stratford lived until 1616.

5 With the hyphenated “Shake-speare” on the cover, the Sonnets also suggest strongly that “Shakespeare” was a penname and that the author’s real identity was destined to remain unknown. In Sonnet 72 “Shakespeare” asks that his “name be buried where my body is.” Sonnet 81: “Though I, once gone, to all the world must die.” Sonnet 76: “Every word doth almost tell my name.”

4 Unlike other writers of the period, not a single manuscript or letter exists in Shakspere’s own handwriting. Nothing survives of a literary nature connecting William of Stratford (the man) with any of the “Shakespeare” works.

3 There is no evidence of a single payment to William of Stratford as an author. No evidence of patron-author relationship and no personal, contemporaneous evidence of a relationship with a fellow writer.

2 William of Stratford’s detailed 1616 will makes no mention of anything even vaguely literary—no books, unpublished manuscripts, library or diaries. Not even a family bible is mentioned.

1 William of Stratford’s death in 1616 was a singular “non-event,” despite the fact that “Shakespeare” the author was widely recognized at the time as one of England’s greatest writers. Why was no notice taken of his death if he were such a literary luminary? Finally, reprints of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* published after his death do not mention his recent passing.

Concordia Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference 2012

Richard Joyrich

The 16th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference commenced at 6:00 pm, *Thursday, April 12, 2012* at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, home of America's only academic Shakespeare Authorship studies program.

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan

The first talk was by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, who has nearly finished her film documentary, *Nothing Truer than Truth*. Once final editing is done, Cheryl plans to exhibit it at various film festivals.

Cheryl has shown clips from the movie at previous conferences to demonstrate her thesis that Edward de Vere was bisexual and that it is his bisexuality which is the key to understanding why he had to conceal his identity. Most of it was filmed in northern Italy, where Cheryl retraced de Vere's travels.

The clip Cheryl showed to the conference contained excerpts of interviews. One was with Diane Paulus, artistic director of American Repertory Theater in Boston, who is also the director of an adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* called *The Donkey Show*, a "disco experience" featuring cross-dressing and wild times. It is still showing weekly at Club Oberon in Boston. Another interview was with Tina Packer, founder of Shakespeare & Company, a theater organization in western Massachusetts. There were also interviews with Richard Waugaman and Roger Stritmatter. Hopefully most, if not all, of the interviews will end up in the final edit of the documentary.

Cheryl is very interested in the bisexuality and gender-identity issues in the sonnets and plays. This topic will be a big part of the finished documentary (although most of it is about the year-and-a-half de Vere spent in Italy).

Sylvia Holmes

Sylvia Holmes continued the talk she gave last fall at Concordia on Shakespeare's sojourns in Italy. Sylvia took many of the photos used in Richard Roe's new book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, on a visit with her daughter in 2006. Sylvia described the trip, showing us many of her photos and explaining how she was able to find a lot, if not everything Roe had hoped for. Sylvia finished off with a quick recap of her talk from last fall about her disagreement with Roe concerning the location of the Sagittary in *Othello*.

Al Austin

The last talk of the evening was by the "legendary" Al Austin, producer and presenter of the famous 1989 PBS Frontline presentation, *The Shakespeare Mystery*. This program, along with Charlton Ogburn's 1984 book, really launched the Authorship Debate nationally. Al has just written *The Cottage*, a novel about the Authorship Question. Al read excerpts from the book which includes a character called Lester Crowne, based, apparently accurately, on A. L. Rowse.

Al thinks that Stratfordian scholars are getting scared of how the public is finding out about the Authorship Question and the

possibility of Edward de Vere being confirmed as the true author. So they are resorting to many tactics to discourage debate.

Al calls it the “Eight Step Program”:
Step 1: Ridicule the doubters. Step 2: The “Dating” Game. Step 3: Trivial Pursuit (finding “mistakes” made by Shakespeare to try to show he didn’t really know Italy and other things). Step 4: Genius (this explains everything). Step 5: Conspiracy Theory. Step 6: Doubters’ Snobbery. Step 7: Non Sequiturs (bringing up “facts” about de Vere that have nothing to do with his qualifications as a writer (such as that he mistreated his wife). And finally, Step 8: “The Play’s the Thing” (who cares who wrote the plays?).

Friday, April 13, 2012

Roger Stritmatter

Roger is working on an exciting project that may turn out to be very important (almost a game-changer). He reported recently discovering a 1563 edition of Seneca’s plays, heavily annotated with underlinings and notes in the margins in Latin and Greek.

Roger suspects that these annotations are by de Vere. Comparing them to samples of the earl’s handwriting in letters and dedications shows both similarities and differences. The problem, as with all script analysis, is trying to tell whether the differences are due to natural variation (an individual’s handwriting can vary markedly) or if they mean that there were two people involved. The similarities could be ascribed to separate individuals studying from the same “copy-book” when learning to write.

Roger then went over evidence that Shakespeare was indebted to Seneca (especially in *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*). There are pretty good correspon-

dences with the annotated Seneca volume and those aspects of his work that influenced Shakespeare. Also, there are parallels between some of the annotations and ideas used by Oxford in his letters and dedications.

Roger is still working on this, but it we might have another “Geneva Bible” breakthrough on our hands. Exciting!

Earl Showerman.

A retired physician, Earl is taking a break from his research on Shakespeare’s use of Greek sources, and instead spoke about Shakespeare’s knowledge of medicine. Building on Dr Frank Davis’s work, e.g. in *The Oxfordian*, 2000, available free at the SOS website, and several other books on Shakespeare’s medical knowledge, Earl demonstrated the playwright’s remarkable knowledge of General Medicine, Toxicology, Syncope, Near-Death and Sudden Death; Resuscitation, Psychopathological Phenomena; and Mental Illness and Dementia. Earl noted connections between Oxford and several physicians and medical scholars of the day.

Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky

After lunch, Roger took the podium again. Lynne Kositsky was unable to attend. Roger summarized the research he and Lynne have done on *The Tempest*. After publication in mainstream journals they received undue criticism and were unable to rebut challenges in those same journals. They also were not able to get their papers accepted at “orthodox” Shakespeare conferences. Lynne and Roger have a book coming out later this year which will include their findings and provide a chance to rebut their critics.

Katherine Chiljan

Katherine spoke on “The Importance of Chester’s *Love’s Martyr* to the Authorship

Question.” *Love’s Martyr* is a long poem published in a 1601 anthology that included Shakespeare’s *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, and poems by Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston.

Katherine, who was one of the recipients of Concordia University’s *Vero Nihil Verius* awards this year for Distinguished Scholarship, described how the poem is an allegory about a phoenix—Beauty—who has a turtle dove for a lover—Truth—and then has a child, described as a “princely phoenix.” The Phoenix seems to be Elizabeth, and thus the claim is being made, allegorically, that she had a child. Katherine did not go into who the turtle dove is (but in her recent *Shakespeare Suppressed* she identifies him [the poem’s “Truth”] as Oxford). Katherine also pointed out that Jonson, Chapman, and Marston were playwrights who got into serious trouble over the plays *The Isle of Dogs* and *Eastward Ho*. Shakespeare however never got into any trouble, either for his poems or for *Richard II*, which was played before the Essex Rebellion (also in 1601). Why is that, Katherine wondered? Read *Shakespeare Suppressed* to discover the answer.

Saturday, April 14, 2012

William Ray

In his talk, “The Suits of Woe: Hamlet’s Unquiet Soul,” Bill gave a carefully-reasoned and erudite description of the personality characteristics of genius and other psychological “clues” in the works of Shakespeare, showing how they applied so very well to Edward de Vere. The talk had seven sections: “Was Oxford a Genius Personality?” “The Rebellious Orphan in Society,” “Conflicted Love,” “Philosophy and Wisdom as Psychic Consolation,” “Nature as the Soul’s Revenge,” “*The Courtier* as the

Epitome of Medieval Learning” and “Facing Death.” This talk was very well received and earned a protracted standing ovation by conference attendees.

Richard Whalen

Richard’s “The Hybrid Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*: Greek Prophetesses as Comical Scottish Witches” was very interesting. Richard is publishing a second edition of his and Daniel Wright’s co-edited Oxfordian edition of *Macbeth* later this year, and this information will be in it.

Richard explained that the adjective *weird* in “weird sisters” comes from the Scandinavian *weyard*, and refers to the three Fates or Norns in Greek mythology. They are prophetesses, and the “witches” in *Macbeth* (actually called “witches” only once in the play) of course sometimes function like that. However, most of the time they are Scottish witches (not English, who have different characteristics and habits) and are, accordingly, the source of much bawdy humor. Richard noted that the author knew much about the traditions of Continental and Scottish witches, as distinguished from English ones, which is consistent with what we know of de Vere’s travels, education and experiences.

Daniel Wright

Daniel spoke on “The Lost Royal Child Recovered in Shakespeare’s Plays.” He pointed out how the plays often feature lost royal children, changeling children, alienated princes, displaced heirs and unacknowledged royal bastards. Why is that? Dan proposed that Oxfordians—open-minded as we are—should not only be trying to figure out who Shakespeare was, but why Shakespeare wrote as he did: choosing, for example, to rewrite and dramatize established stories and royal histories and then altering specific features in those stories and histo-

ries. Why, for example, is the lead character in *King John* not the king but an unacknowledged royal bastard who is, to official history, a fiction? Wright argued that good Shakespeare investigators should investigate why Oxford selected to 1. preserve, 2. delete, 3. “tweak,” or 4. invent “out of whole cloth” the tales and characters he sought to dramatize. Dan reviewed the historical nature of Elizabethan England, both what was promoted as “official truth” in government, i.e., Cecilian history/propaganda and that “suppressed truth”—his “art made tongued by authority”—which was embedded in Shakespeare’s poems and plays to escape government censorship and destruction.

Michael Delahoyde

After lunch, we heard from Michael on “Oxfordian *Twelfth Night* Epiphanies.” This was another in a series of talks he has given, sometimes with Ren Draya, on Oxfordian connections and allusions in the plays of Shakespeare. Michael suggested that the play’s title really has nothing to do with the story and offered some explanations (both traditional and Oxfordian) for it. He talked a bit about the dating of the play (traditional and Oxfordian). He then went on to describe how the characters can be seen as representative of real individuals, e.g., Olivia as Queen Elizabeth, Malvolio as Christopher Hatton, Aguecheek as Philip Sydney, Toby Belch as Peregrine Bertie, Maria as Mary Vere, and Feste (and also Orsino) as Oxford himself. Maybe, Michael posited, the title of *Twelfth Night* (or Epiphany, commemorating the three magi visiting Jesus), is slyly meant to refer to another “holy family”—Elizabeth, Oxford and their son.

Oxfordian Jeopardy

Alex McNeil hosted a rousing round of “Oxfordian Jeopardy,” with a remarkable likeness of the TV show’s game board

projected on the theatre wall of the university auditorium. Three of Daniel Wright’s undergraduate students competed for honors, along with members of the audience. It was great fun.

Awards Ceremony

“*Vero Nihil Verius Awards for Scholarship*” went to Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky (in absentia) for their collaborative work on *The Tempest*, and to Katherine Chiljan for her new book, *Shakespeare Suppressed*. *Vero Nihil Verius awards for “Distinguished Achievement in the Shakespearean Arts”* went to Al Austin, and to Lisa Wilson and Laura Wilson Matthias for their groundbreaking documentary, *Last Will. & Testament*.

Accepting his award, Al laughingly said that attending the conference showed him what an ignoramus he was compared to all the scholarship which was on display. He needed more education, but feared he was too old. However he still had hope. There is (he has heard) an amazing grammar school in Stratford-upon-Avon that can give him all the education he needs to understand the plays of Shakespeare, and in just a few short years.

Last Will. & Testament *

After dinner, we moved to the university’s Fine Arts Building to see the American premiere of *Last Will. & Testament*, the Lisa Wilson and Laura Wilson Matthias-directed work.

Roland Emmerich, of *Anonymous* fame, is the Executive Producer. The film is an amazing achievement, a beautiful, transfiguring, and persuasive film. Hopefully Lisa and Laura can get it shown on TV soon, or maybe issued via Netflix or DVD. Daniel

* The movie’s title includes a period after *Will*, followed by an ampersand

Wright praised the film as “unrivaled—the finest and most breathtaking work” in documenting the case for Oxford as the author of the Shakespeare canon, especially for new audiences. It is the heir to Al Austin’s breakthrough *Frontline* documentary of 1989. Al himself praised the film as “exceptional beyond words, a landmark achievement in film.”

Last Will. & Testament is about 90 minutes long and features great production values (including several scenes from *Anonymous*). It contains interviews and contributions from, among others, Stanley Wells and Jonathan Bate, Sir Derek Jacobi, Vanessa Redgrave, Mark Rylance, Hank Whittemore, Bill Boyle, Professor Daniel Wright, Professor Roger Stritmatter, Professor Michael Delahoyde, Professor William Leahy, Diana Price, Lord Burghley (Michael Cecil), and Charles Beauclerk. The film is in three sections (called “acts” by Lisa and Laura, but not noted as such in the film). These are:

1. Why the traditional story doesn’t make sense (except to Stratfordians); 2. The case for Edward de Vere; and 3. A possible reason for what happened and why we should care who wrote the plays. This last part, the advancement of the “Prince Tudor” thesis, was not given in a “dogmatic fashion” and Derek Jacobi called it only one of several possible scenarios.

This film has already been sold to Sky TV in England (for three years) and premiered there on April 21. Deals will probably be made in Germany and Russia (both places where *Anonymous* did very well). But there are still difficulties getting something in the US.

A panel discussion after the screening of the film featured Lisa and Laura and also

Michael Delahoyde, Bill Boyle, Roger Stritmatter, Hank Whittemore and Daniel Wright.

Audience questions were taken. Among the interesting information revealed was that Lisa and Laura had approached Kenneth Branagh, Harold Bloom, and James Shapiro for the film, but all declined. Shapiro did not even answer their inquiry.

Lisa and Laura said that they had about 254,000 words edited down to 12,000 for the film as it exists now. Perhaps some future use of the unused footage will be found.

PBS and some other US networks wanted the film edited down to 60 minutes or less, but Lisa and Laura don’t want to do this. They said that if they can’t get a TV deal in 60-90 days, they will negotiate with Netflix.

A lot of the discussion was about how to

market the film (via Facebook, for example) and build an audience for it.

There was

even a discussion about how the marketing of *Anonymous* could have been done better. Both Lisa and Laura, who were consultants for *Anonymous*, said that they had argued against substituting *Richard III* for *Richard II* as the play staged before the Essex Rebellion, but were voted down by Emmerich and Orloff.

Despite the high quality of the conference’s other talks and discussions, *Last Will. & Testament* was certainly the high point of Concordia 2012.

Daniel Wright and Jim Boyd contributed to this report

Among interesting information revealed was that Lisa and Laura had approached Kenneth Branagh, Harold Bloom, and James Shapiro for the film, but all declined. Shapiro did not even answer their inquiry.

President's Letter

We All Need to Help Getting the Message Out

Richard Joyrich

Despite attempts by the Stratfordian “establishment” to quash it, the inquiry into the Shakespeare Authorship Question continues to gain momentum. New calls for reevaluation of the “paradigm” are coming from Theater and History departments of various universities, as well as in the popular press.

This is an international effort, with strong results coming from Germany, Russia, England, and other countries. The recent film, *Anonymous*, has been doing quite well overseas and has garnered critical acclaim and awards.

Last Will. & Testament

The new authorship documentary by Laura Matthias and Lisa Wilson, *Last Will. & Testament*, is now being shown in England and is expected to debut in other countries (including the United States) in the near future.

All of this is quite heartening, but we must continue to “apply pressure” and get our message out. The Society is well poised to do this, but we must continue to draw on support from the membership. I again urge you to help us recruit new members by offering your friends and acquaintances a half-price membership using our “Recruit-A-Member” program. Information on this is available via our website.

Membership Renewals

In addition, please renew your own membership for 2102 if you have not already done so. You can see if your membership is cur-

rent by checking the address label on this newsletter.

We must also continue to solicit contributions from our members to fund several exciting projects and efforts.

I also encourage you to consider joining our Board of Trustees or serving on one of our many committees. Please contact me if you are interested at rjoyrich@aol.com. We also welcome any suggestions you may have for improving our Society or for ways of furthering our aims.

Pasadena Conference

I invite you to attend our upcoming 8th Annual Joint Conference with the Shakespeare Fellowship in Pasadena, California from October 18-21. The Conference will be held at the Pasadena Old Town Marriott and will feature a showing of the new documentary *Last Will. & Testament*, along with extra footage and discussion with the filmmakers, Laura Matthias and Lisa Wilson. We will also see more excerpts from the upcoming documentary by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, *Nothing Truer than Truth*. In addition, there will be many interesting and exciting presentations from some of our leading scholars. You can get further details and updates on the websites of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship.

It really is an exciting time to be an Oxfordian (or otherwise interested in the Authorship Question) and I'm proud to be associated with all of you. Let's keep it going!



Shakespeare Oxford Society

The SOS Legacy Gift Campaign

Support Our Efforts to Promote Discussion and Research into the Authorship Question

By encouraging scholarship and discussion we will be able to demonstrate—finally—that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, was the true author of the Shakespeare canon. Please consider making a bequest to the SOS in your will or living trust. Your bequest will be a powerful and flexible way to ensure that the Oxfordian Movement will continue to grow and flourish long after your lifetime.

Types of Bequests

- *Outright Bequest:* A specific dollar amount, asset, or percentage of your estate.
- *Residuary Bequest:* A percentage or all of the “rest, residuary, and remainder” of your estate after all other gifts, taxes, and expenses have been taken care of.
- *Contingent Bequest:* A gift only if another event has occurred, e.g., if you outlive your spouse.
- *Life Insurance or Retirement Fund:* Name the SOS as a beneficiary.

Who Should Make a Legacy Gift?

Many of us who have been active in the SOS are not in the position to make a major gift during our lifetime, but a bequest is a simple way for us to do so through our estates. A gift of 1%, 5% or 10% would help ensure that the SOS can continue its work.

How Legacy Gifts Help the SOS

For more than 50 years the Society has hosted conferences, and supported publications, internet sites, and educational events that have stimulated increased interest in the topic, and have convinced many experts that Edward de Vere is indeed the true author of the canon. But there is still a great deal to do. Academics and vested interests almost totally ignore the new scholarship, and routinely insist that there is no question that William Shakespeare of Stratford is the author. Without the SOS and its sister organizations in the US and England, the topic would be dead. But with your help, we can continue to open minds and hearts to the reality of the Authorship Question. To ensure our ability to do this work, the Board of the SOS has undertaken a campaign to increase the Society's endowment, with the hope that it can continue its work uninterrupted by the fluctuations in dues and donations that such an organization inevitably experiences. A larger endowment will allow us to increase funding for publicity, education, research and other activities.

Example of Bequest

I hereby give, devise and bequeath \$ _____ or _____ (specific asset), or _____ % of rest, residue and remainder of my estate to the Shakespeare Oxford Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational corporation incorporated under the laws of New York State, and with the mailing address P.O. Box 808, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598-0808.

Tax Benefits

Gifts to the SOS are tax-deductible and may reduce your income taxes or estate taxes. If you would like more information, please contact Joan Leon, SOS Board Member, at 510-910-5773 or at joan.leon1@gmail.com.