



# Shakespeare Matters

*“The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship”*



Fellowship trustee Ian Haste with a question.

## Conference 2010: Ashland, Oregon!

by Roger Stritmatter

Over the weekend of September 16-19, one hundred and fifty Oxfordians gathered at the Ashland Springs Hotel for the 2010 joint conference of the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society. In the estimation of many, it was one of the best conferences in recent memory, in terms of the quality of presentations, content of informal exchanges, and collegiality among members. For several years the joint conference has been organized by a committee with representatives from both organizations. This year’s organizing Committee included Ashland resident (and SF President) Earl Showerman, SF Trustees Bonner Cutting, Dick Desper, and Pat Urquhart, along with SOS officers John Hamill, Richard Joyrich, Susan Width, and Virginia Hyde.

“The support we received from both the Oregon Shakespeare

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Proving Oxfordian Authorship of “Sweet Cytherea”

by WJ Ray

“Oxford’s poems do not resemble Shakespeare’s. They were two different writers.” Such is Academe’s preclusive claim that a literary chasm exists between the known, usually early, writings of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, and the collected works we recognize by the spectacular epithet “Shakespeare.” As Oxford published under a series of pseudonyms and proxies in order to carry on an artistic vocation shunned by his class, only three subscribed poems after his youth have survived (“Shakespeare” I: 553). There are no original notes or manuscripts to document an Oxford to “Shakespeare” stylistic evolution. His plays are said to have been lost. The 1951 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* noted only, “He was a lyric poet of no small merit.” Orthodoxy therefore may prefer the slanted odds of comparing *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* to Oxford’s juvenilia, involving a gap of twenty-five to thirty-five years in a life full of writing and personal catastrophe.

*(Continued on page 15)*

## Ben Jonson Made Me Laugh

by Ted Story

Recently Ben Jonson made me laugh out loud. To say I was surprised is an understatement because usually I don’t find him very funny. So I was caught off guard when I discovered that for years I had been looking at a great Ben Jonson joke and hadn’t noticed it. Being a theater man, jokes are important to me. So before I tell you Jonson’s joke, please bear with me while I get a little analytical about something most people don’t think about very much.

Every joke consists of two parts: the setup and the punch. The setup plants an idea or a picture in the audience’s head. The punch makes them see it in an unexpected way.

As George Burns said: “Acting is all about honesty – If you can fake that you’ve got it made.”

*(Continued on page 13)*

From the Editors

## Wait Till They See *This*

Greetings, and welcome to the first 2011 (Winter) issue of *Shakespeare Matters*, which comes to you on the heels of the fall 2010 issue. There have been some positive changes in our editorial offices, but before we tell you about those we want to apologize for the delayed delivery of the fall issue. The issue was delivered to the Baltimore printer in mid-December, with instructions that it be mailed immediately after Christmas. By mid-January, when it became apparent that no one had received a copy, Roger Stritmatter contacted the printer. They investigated; to their embarrassment they discovered that, due to an internal mixup, they had forgotten to mail the issues. They did end up paying for the postage themselves, which saves the Shakespeare Fellowship a little money; but, simply, there is no excuse for such a delay. We will do our best to make sure such a thing doesn't happen again. If anyone is still missing this issue, please contact Roger Stritmatter at Stritmatter24@hotmail.com and one will be mailed to you. The issue is available online on the *Shakespeare Matters* page at the Fellowship site.

Second, with this issue Alex McNeil takes over as editor of *Shakespeare Matters*. Roger Stritmatter had found it too difficult to juggle the editorship with his full-time academic responsibilities at Coppin State University and with the demands of producing (together with Gary Goldstein) the Shakespeare Fellowship's new online journal, *Brief Chronicles*. Alex, who retired from his government position in 2010, now had extra time and offered to help; Roger was happy to accept Alex's offer. Alex is already familiar with much of the work, as he has assisted Roger for several years with editing and proofreading *Shakespeare Matters*.

Roger will continue to be involved with this publication, but he will focus on its design and layout. He will also continue

to contribute articles and news items. The actual printing and mailing of the hard copy issues will be relocated from Baltimore to Newton, Massachusetts.

We don't expect anything radically different in the content of upcoming issues. We will do our best to provide our members with four annual issues of *Shakespeare Matters*, which should contain a variety of interesting items—articles long and short, book reviews, and news notes of interest to the Oxfordian cause. Submissions are welcome. Feel free to send your ideas and comments to Alex at [alex@amcneil.com](mailto:alex@amcneil.com).

We are sad to include in this issue such a large number of obituaries for departed friends and colleagues. On a brighter note this issue contains the usual lineup of Oxfordian news, scholarship and commentary you have come to expect from *Shakespeare Matters*: WJ Ray's "Proving Oxfordian Authorship of 'Sweet Cytherea'"

not only fills a longstanding lacuna in English literary history by suggesting an authorship for the anonymous Venus and Adonis poems of *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), but will (we promise) stretch your imagination of the aural possibilities sounding forth when "hearing between the lines" of these enigmatic poems; Ted Storey provides a humorous first-person account of how he came to realize the comic potential of Ben Jonson's likely involvement with the first folio "Droeshout" portrait of Shakespeare; Roger Stritmatter surveys the scholarship of the fall 2010 SF/SOS conference in Ashland, Oregon.

On the news front we keep hearing very positive advance gossip on Roland Emmerich's *Anonymous*, reportedly delayed for release until September 30, 2011, in expectation of big wins at the year's Oscar Awards.

Linda Theil and the bloggers at

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship  
is to promote public awareness and acceptance  
of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by  
Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604),  
and further to encourage a high level of scholar-  
ly research and publication into all aspects of  
Shakespeare studies, and also into the history and  
culture of the Elizabethan era.

The Society was founded and incorporated  
in 2001 in the State of Massachusetts and is  
chartered under the membership corporation laws  
of that state. It is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit  
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ductible to the extent allowed by law.

Oberon (<http://oberonshakespearestudy-group.blogspot.com/>) have been visited by a premonition of the film's success.



**Rhys Ifans -- as Hamlet? in *Anonymous*, said to be a stunningly crafted cinematic recreation of 16th century London.**

Jaws dropped last night when during a discussion of Roland Emmerich's *Anonymous* [when] Oberon member Robin Browne casually said in his understated British way, "I've seen some of the footage."

What!

Turns out our film-maker friend who is a member of the British Society of Cinematographers recently attended a local workshop held by Arriflex to demonstrate its new Alexa electronic, high-definition camera. Since Emmerich used the new camera to shoot *Anonymous*, the workshop included soundless footage of the film.

"It does look very beautiful; it has a great feeling of the period," Browne said. "The little, tiny footage we saw was very beautiful and very atmospheric — pictorially, it could be a gem."

Confirming the seriousness with which at least some of the cast is approaching the challenge of bringing Oxford's story (or at least *one version* of it) to the big screen Rhys Ifans, who is playing Oxford, had this to say at an April 29, 2010, interview at Babelsberg Studios in Berlin:

I play Edward de Vere, the earl of Oxford, the author of these works. He has a mind like a creamy pumpkin the size of the universe. . . . I have been increasingly convinced as a wordsmith that this question allows us to access

the magic of whoever person . . . wrote this. . . a person whose life uncannily echoes every wail, every laugh, every limp and every cry in Shakespeare's works. I'm kind of deeply moved by the whole thing and *talk-ing to you is a nuisance*. (our italics: since when does a Hollywood star say that talking the press is a "nuisance"?)

Of course, as reported in the previous issue, fall 2011 is also going to see the publication at last of Richard Roe's magnum opus on Shakespeare's Italian ethos, a book more than twenty years in the making and scheduled for publication by HarperCollins. Gary Goldstein also informs us of several more fall 2011 events in the pipeline, some noted in this issue's News section and others scheduled to be included in the Spring issue, which we expect to publish in May or June.

Readers of *Shakespeare Matters* may be intrigued to learn, in a development we'd like to bring you more about in the spring issue, of a surprisingly positive turn of events on the Amazon review front.

For starters, Oxfordians have maintained a steady and growing presence on Amazon discussion threads about Shakespeare (<http://www.amazon.com/tag/shakespeare/forum/>).

The three largest threads on the forums, constituting more than 2800 posts, or about 90% of the total, are on authorship. Three large threads, "Bring on the Anti-Stratfordians" — which

started as a condescending critique of Shakespeare doubters and has evolved into a discussion containing many unique and interesting Oxfordian insights punctuated by the usual yelps and insults — "Edward de Vere," and "Who Wrote Shakespeare's Plays" are by far the most lively, entertaining, and intellectually stimulating discussions in the community.

Of particular interest is the remarkable turn of events on the reviews page for Shapiro's *Contested Will*. Until recently, however, although a number of articulate anti-Stratfordians had weighed in, it was safe to conclude that Shapiro's reputation was still intact and that the majority of commentators preferred the Stratfordian reviews to those by independent critics of Shapiro.

That has now changed, and it seems likely that the shift is a permanent one. After months in which one fawning review by Rob Harvey was consistently rated as the most useful review on the site, two critical reviews, one by Richard Waugaman and another by "Libbey," have risen to the top of the review charts and show no sign

of relinquishing their prominence.

In closing we'd like to seize this occasion to offer a much deserved notice of thanks to Richard Desper, who has served faithfully in the office of treasurer of the Shakespeare Fellowship for many years now. Dick's post will be filled by Alex McNeil, but we look forward

to many more years of Dick's scholarship and companionship.

Dick will continue as assistant treasurer, and will also be responsible for maintaining our membership lists — one of those really thankless but all-important tasks. And, speaking of membership, if you haven't yet renewed yours for 2011, please do so!



**Dr. Richard Desper, taking care of business at the 2010 Ashland Conference.**

# From a Never Writer to an Ever Reader: News...

## Gale Publishing to Reprint Oxfordian Research

Two papers which propose that Edward de Vere wrote the Shakespeare canon are being reprinted in April by Gale Publishing in their library reference textbook, *Literature Criticism from 1400-1800* (vol. 193). To our knowledge, this marks the first time a scholarly book publisher has printed research proposing the real identity of William Shakespeare to be Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. Gale specializes in reference publications for the library and university markets (see [www.gale.cengage.com](http://www.gale.cengage.com)).

The two papers originally appeared in *The Elizabethan Review*, a semiannual peer reviewed journal of the English Renaissance that was published from 1993 to 1999 (see [www.elizabethanreview.com](http://www.elizabethanreview.com)). The first paper is by Charles Beauclerk, "Edward de Vere and the Psychology of Feudalism" (Autumn 1995), the second by Richard Lester, "An Alternative Theory of the Oxford Cover-Up" (Spring 1999).

A third paper on the Oxfordian hypothesis is also being reprinted by Gale in another textbook, *Shakespearean Criticism*, also due in April. It is by Earl Showerman, MD, titled "Shakespeare's Many Much Ado's," which first appeared in the 2009 inaugural edition of *Brief Chronicles*, an annual peer reviewed journal published by the Shakespeare Fellowship (see [www.briefchronicles.com](http://www.briefchronicles.com)).

"We should note the extraordinary nature of the event," stated BC Managing Editor Gary Goldstein. "After generations of censorship, it appears the scholarly community is slowly changing its policy of exclusion. We welcome the emerging conversation over the identity of the world's greatest cultural icon, and hope the tenor of the exchange will be transformed as a result."

## Dr. Waugaman Launches New Web Site

Dr. Richard Waugaman, a frequent contributor to these pages, has launched a new web site devoted to the authorship question, [www.oxfreudian.com](http://www.oxfreudian.com). Waugaman, a psychoanalyst and professor at Georgetown University School of Medicine, reserved the "Oxfreudian" domain name after using the term in an email to John Andrews, former editor of *The Shakespeare Quarterly*. Waugaman's son Garrett taught him how to build and maintain a web site, and surprised his father on Christmas day 2010 with a web site he had secretly designed; the main page features an image of Edward de Vere merged with Sigmund Freud. "Since people's visual image of Shakespeare is one of psychological stumbling blocks we have to overcome, I thought my son's graphic was especially inspired," Dr. Waugman noted.

The site contains a number of thought-provoking articles and book reviews, most of them in .pdf form. As a psychoanalyst and author of more than 100 professional publications, Dr. Waugaman is particularly interested in the creative process and

in how creative artists reveal themselves in their works. As Waugaman further noted, "When I was at the Folger last week, I had an unsettling feeling of unease about my personal identity – what am I, a psychoanalyst or an amateur Shakespeare scholar? Then I remembered the name of my web site, and it perked up my spirits. I'm an Oxfreudian – I try to integrate my professional identity with my determination to show that Freud was correct about Shakespeare's true identity."

## New Whittemore Book

Hank Whittemore's recently published book *Shakespeare's Son and His Sonnets* (Groton, MA: Martin and Lawrence Press) is an "expanded introduction" to *The Monument* (2005), his Sonnet edition, which presented an innovative explanation of the language, structure and "story" as recorded by the earl of Oxford. The new book is being marketed and distributed to libraries, retail outlets and online sites such as Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble, the latter with twenty mid-Atlantic stores also carrying it.

The book contains an account of the Essex Rebellion as well as excerpts of letters from the earl of Southampton written in the Tower to the Privy Council and Sir Robert Cecil, showing the earl's use of words similar to those found in sonnets that Whittemore believes to have been written in the same time period. Two chapters deal with Sonnet 107 as relating to Southampton's release from the Tower on April 10, 1603, while another focuses on Sonnet 133 as representing Oxford's earlier plea to Queen Elizabeth to liberate Southampton.

"My goal with this book is to provide a clear and concise overview of *The Monument*," Whittemore said, "and to go through a publisher with distribution channels that will reach a much broader readership among the general public. I am convinced more than ever that Oxford used the Sonnets to record for posterity the true story of why he adopted the 'Shakespeare' pen name in 1593 in relationship to Southampton, and, crucially, why he agreed after the rebellion of 1601 to obliterate his identity or, as he expressed it, 'My name be buried where my body is.' In other words, all along we have had the answer to the Shakespeare Authorship Question right in front of us, provided to us by the author himself."

## US Publisher to Bring Out New Book on Oxford

McFarland and Company, which has published two Oxfordian texts – Warren Hope's *The Shakespeare Controversy* (1992 and 2009) and William Farina's *De Vere as Shakespeare* (2005) – is bringing out a new book on the Oxfordian hypothesis in May by Richard Malim. The author is the Secretary of The De Vere Society in England. The book is titled, *The Earl of Oxford and the Making*

of "Shakespeare": *The Literary Life of Edward de Vere in Context*; it is available for pre-order on Amazon.com.

### German Book on Oxford to Appear in Paperback

We're pleased to report that Kurt Kreiler's 2009 book on the Oxfordian case, *Der Mann, der Shakespeare erfand*, was considered a success — it sold 8,000 copies in Germany in its hardcover edition. To underscore its success with German readers, a paperback edition in German is coming out in 2011. Moreover, an English translation is being prepared. It will be titled *Anonymous SHAKESPEARE, A Study of Facts and Problems*; the author is currently searching for a publisher in the US and England.

### Autumn Events: Roe Book and Emmerich Movie

Sony Pictures announced in January 2011 that the Oxfordian authorship movie, *Anonymous*, directed by Roland Emmerich and starring Rhys Ifans, Vanessa Redgrave, and Sir Derek Jacobi, will be released in the US on September 30th.

HarperCollins has announced it will publish the late Richard Roe's book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy: Then and Now*, on November 1st.

### In Memoriam, Robert Brazil (1956-2011)

Robert Brazil passed away this past summer at the tragically early age of 55 after a lifetime of research and publication on the Oxfordian hypothesis. I met Robert several times at Oxfordian conferences — most memorably in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1995 when he spoke about the emblems used in Shakespearean publications, and again in New York City in 2003.

In my mind he will always be this bearded wonder of energy, talk, and drama. He was ambitious to do things — to get not just the research out into circulation but to provide everyone with the literary context of the entire era so that redundancy of effort could be avoided for Oxfordian scholars. To that end, co-partnered the web site, Elizabethan Authors, with Barbara Flues, which published a cornucopia of plays, pamphlets and poetry titles from the Elizabethan era. To foster original research by Oxfordians, Robert initiated the private listserv, ElizaForum, which he moderated for almost a decade.

Robert's contributions went beyond website publishing, for his own research appeared in the *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, *The Oxfordian*, and in two privately published monographs—*Angel Day, the English Secretary and the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* (2008), and *The True Story of the Shakespeare Publications, Volume One: Edward de Vere & the Shakespeare Printers* (1999). On top of all this, Robert also served as editor of the SOS newsletter in 2002-03.

His enthusiasm for the chase was infectious and his support for scholarship, debate and publication endless. We will miss his indomitable spirit. RIP, Robert. — Gary Goldstein

### Joanna and Bob Wexler: A Remembrance

Joanna Wexler, lifelong Oxfordian, of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, died June 30, 2009. Her husband Robert Wexler, one of many people Joanna brought to the Oxfordian cause, followed her on September 23, 2010.

Joanna's father, a professor of history who taught his daughter to think clearly, first got her interested in the Shakespeare controversy. Joanna attended Radcliffe College, where she received her BA in 1952, and immediately upon graduation married a young



**Vogue was a perfect fit for Joanna.**

**She had an unerring sense for both beauty and publicity and became a star of New York intellectual society...Among the people she met during that period was actor Sir Derek Jacobi.**

**Richard Whalen and I have heard two different versions of this story: In mine she was at a dinner party in New York; in his, the party was in London. During the dinner, Joanna talked about the authorship. Jacobi expressed some doubt. Joanna left the room for a moment, came back with a copy of *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, and purred, as only Joanna could, "You must read this." In any case, Joanna was not to be gainsaid. Jacobi read the book, and we all know the rest of that story.**



Harvard man named Harold Brodkey.

One doesn't usually mention a first husband, when a second marriage was as loving as Joanna and Bob's, but Harold Brodkey was a writer, and throughout his life he wrote about Joanna. His short story "First Love" is about her, and his most famous piece of writing, "Innocence," has a heroine who is a princess in Harvard Yard. Joanna and Harold Brodkey had a daughter, Ann Emily, known as Temi Rose, but the marriage did not last. After her divorce, Joanna became a single mother, working as a Rockette and in various publishing houses, before becoming

(Continued on p. 6)

(Memoriam, cont. from p. 5)

beauty editor of *Vogue*.

*Vogue* was a perfect fit for Joanna. She had an unerring sense for both beauty and publicity and became a star of New York intellectual society. Among her close friends in New York was Mike Nichols. She traveled widely for her job, and among the people she met during that period was actor Sir Derek Jacobi.

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In my version it was her copy. I love to think of Joanna traveling with a copy of *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, no small book, as we all know, just in case she should find someone to give it to.

In Richard's version, it was her host's copy that she gave away.

In any case, Joanna was not to be gainsaid. Jacobi read the book, and we all know the rest of that story.

Relatively late in life Joanna met her second, beloved husband, Bob Wexler, a graduate of Phillips Andover and Yale and a leading manufacturer of high-end furniture. Joanna found a second family in Bob's children, Andrew and Susan, and their children: Rebecca, Sarah, Rachel, Simon, Elana, and Machal.

Settling in Brookline, Mass., Bob and Joanna traveled widely for his business and created a series of beautiful houses. They were outstanding collectors, of everything from paintings and prints to medieval wooden statuary. Of special interest to Oxfordians, their collections included a finial from William Cecil's house, Theobalds — a dragon.

They were dedicated supporters of Oxfordian groups, and Joanna had a large library of Oxfordian magazines and books.

Eventually Joanna Jacobi-ized me too. "You should write a book about the Shakespeare mystery," she said one day.

"There is no Shakespeare mystery," said I. (I had gone to Harvard. I knew everything.)

"Come over to my house," said

Joanna, and filled two large shopping bags with books. I went staggering back to my office laden down with books, and magazines, and printouts, knowing that Joanna wouldn't stop asking me until I'd read them all.

Eventually, of course, I did write a book, dedicated to her — "To the only begetter of these ensuing, Joanna Wexler" — and to Shakespeare, whoever he might be. [Editor's note: Sarah Smith's novel *Chasing Shakespeares* was published in 2003.]



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Joanna was a wonderful friend. She was caustic and funny and had a perfect sense of style. She was full of generous advice about how to live one's life intelligently and beautifully. She drank two kinds of tea together, because the flavor was more complex, and she would lunch on two appetizers because they were more fun.

She and Bob were familiar figures at Shakespeare Fellowship dinners where Joanna would shine in discussions of the authorship and Bob would grin and enjoy her. She did not suffer fools gladly, in fact not at all, starting with William Shakespeare.

I can hear her now: "How could anyone believe that illiterate man had anything to do with the works of Shakespeare!" We had discussions, lifelong, about whether Shakespeare could have been illiterate. She never convinced me.

I wish the discussions could have lasted much longer.

Joanna and Bob are buried together in Walnut Hills Cemetery in Brookline, and their friends have planted two trees for them in Larz Anderson Park in Brookline.

—Sarah Smith

### **Elliott Stone (1931-2010)**

Longtime Boston area Oxfordian Elliott Stone passed away on December 19, 2010. He graduated from Boston Latin School in 1949, and attended Cornell University for two years; he then transferred to Harvard, where he received his BA in 1953. Three years later he received his LIB from Harvard Law School, and began practicing law in Boston. His specialties included consumer credit unions and real estate.

In 1958 he won the Republican Congressional primary for the 11<sup>th</sup> District seat and ran (unsuccessfully) against Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neil that November.

After retirement he indulged his lifelong passion for learning in part by taking frequent courses at the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement. The authorship question was among Elliott's many interests. His attention was captivated by Charlton Ogburn's 1975 *Harvard Alumni Magazine* article. He became an outspoken advocate for the Oxfordian cause, and was a generous supporter of many local and national Oxfordian events.

When the Shakespeare Oxford Society conference was held in Boston in 1993 Stone was instrumental in securing Faneuil Hall as the site for a debate/mock trial on the authorship issue which pitted Louis Marder against Charles Burford. More than 400 persons attended the event, which garnered extensive local media coverage. In the late 1990s and into 2000s he served as a trustee of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

Elliott is survived by his wife, Betsey, three children and five grandchildren.

(Cont. on p. 28)

(Conference, cont. from p. 1)

Festival (OSF) and the Ashland Springs Hotel was outstanding,” said Showerman, “and made easier by the knowledge we gained during the first joint conference in Ashland in 2005. Last spring OSF published an interview of executive director Paul Nicholson, which included comments on his doubts on the traditional Shakespeare attribution. When he later agreed to sign the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt in a public ceremony during the conference, I



**Katherine Chiljan delivered a fascinating talk, “Twelve ‘too early’ Allusions to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*,” which identified a dozen references to a Hamlet play dating from 1588 to 1597. Most Stratfordians place the play’s composition circa 1600-01, long after those references. Most of them, according to Chiljan, “were to specific lines in Shakespeare’s play, ruling out the need [to postulate the existence] of an earlier lost play, today known as the ‘Ur-Hamlet.’”**



was assured that our best intentions would be both realized and publicized.”

Several interludes of Elizabethan music provided by the duo Mignarda, a special production of Robin Nordli’s “Bard Babes” and OSF productions of *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *I Henry IV* made the event a memorable experience. Many felt that the *Hamlet* production was one, if not the, best they had ever seen.

The conference was pleased to welcome a descendant of Lord Burghley, William Cecil, in the person of Michael Cecil, 18<sup>th</sup> Baron Burghley and Marquess

of Exeter, who spoke on the relevance of Burghley’s precepts for understanding the Earl of Oxford’s relationship with his guardian Burghley as reflected in the plays (see *Shakespeare Matters*, Fall 2010). Burghley’s precepts were not published until 1616, eighteen years after his own death, and the year Shakespeare of Stratford died. As a crown ward, however, Oxford was raised in Burghley’s house from age 12 until he achieved his majority at 21 (1562-71), and many of his formative educational experiences took place during that time under the influence of Burghley. Many Oxfordians conclude that Oxford had the means, motive, and opportunity to parody his powerful foster father as Polonius in *Hamlet*. Acknowledging this, Michael Cecil went on to suggest that Burghley was “a just, and honorable man, who has sometimes been unfairly maligned.”

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Bonner Miller Cutting, in her talk “Let the Punishment Fit the Crime,” examined the implications of early modern censorship for the authorship question. She summarized contemporary orthodox scholarship on early modern censorship, including Janet Clare’s important book, *Art Made Tongue-tied by Authority* (1999). Cutting argued that although most early modern literary scholars grasp the “basics of the censorship laws,” they routinely ignore their implications when it comes to Shakespeare. “That censorship plays a part in the publication of Shakespeare’s plays is clear from the differences that exist between the quarto and folio editions of many of the plays,” argued Cutting. “When biographies of the other prominent writers of the era are compared to the traditional ‘Shakespeare,’ it is apparent that, somehow, the author of the Shakespeare canon is not being treated quite like his contemporaries.”

Pursuing some questions first brought to our attention by Sir George Greenwood in his 1916 book *Is There a Shakespeare Problem?*, Frank Davis spoke on the theme “The ‘Unlearned’ versus the ‘Learned’ Shakespeare.” Davis described Stratfordian attempts to grapple with the problem of Shakespeare’s learning as “self inflicted” trauma, and found the Stratfordian “dodge-and-feint” strategy “both amusing and informative.” The “unlearned” Shakespeare, Davis noted, gets recycled on a regular basis despite mounting evidence, acknowledged even by many



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Stratfordians, of his erudite knowledge of classical studies and law, his ability to read Italian and French, Latin, and probably Greek. Davis cited the contemporary example of a Wikipedia entry claiming that Shakespeare mistook the painter Giulio Romano as a sculptor in *The Winter’s Tale*. Romano was, of course, a sculptor as well as a painter and architect.

Each morning the Conference pro-

(Continued on p. 8)

(Conference, cont. from p. 7)

gram included panel discussions on the play we had seen the previous evening. Dr. Tom Hunter, Dr. Ren Draya and Dr. Felicia Londré moderated the panels, which included the following OSF actors from each production:

*Merchant*: Vilma Silva (Portia), Anthony Heald (Shylock), and Gregory Linington (Gratiano).

*Hamlet*: Dan Donohue (Hamlet), Jeffrey King (Claudius) and Richard Elmore (Polonius).

*1 Henry IV*: Richard Howard (King Henry), John Tufts (Prince Hal) and James Newcomb (Earl of Worcester).

All the panelists were appreciated by conference attendees, who were excited to hear from the “frontlines” of three professional Shakespearean productions. As usual Jamie Newcomb, a skilled public speaker as well as a superb Shakespearean actor, contributed a unique flair to the *1 Henry IV* panel through his thoughtful application of the Oxfordian premise to many questions of interpretation and motivation. Attendees were also enlightened by the remarks of Jeffrey King (Claudius in *Hamlet*), which helped the audience understand why the production was so remarkable. He explained that they had been guided by the philosophy that “whoever wrote these plays understood human behavior and how to illuminate it.” The director (Bill Rauch) set out to surprise the audience and encourage his performers to be “as bold as we could be” while still respecting the text. The play was a success by that criterion; one exceptionally bold choice, which even those originally reluctant seem to have appreciated, was the staging of “The Mousetrap,” the play within the play, as a riotously comic modern hip-hop routine. Most importantly, it appears, actors were told to forget their lines after memorizing them, so that each speech came fresh in the moment, as if the actor was “trying to find the words to express his or her unique feelings at that moment”—to discover, rather than recite, the lines.

Anthony Heald (Shylock) offered an illuminating insight. At first he had had grave reservations about OSF’s decision to present *Merchant*; but, after studying the text and performing the play, Heald felt strongly that the play is not anti-Semitic.

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan discussed sexuality and gender identity in *Merchant of Venice*. She presented an overview of “contemporary critical analysis of the themes of gender identity” in *Merchant* and speculated on some historical sources for some of the characters, including Portia, Antonio, and Bassanio. She wondered whether these three characters were best interpreted as “different aspects of the romantic ideal” or as “conflicting aspects of the author’s own identity,” or both. Regular readers of *Shakespeare Matters* will recognize Eagan-Donovan as the dynamo behind a documentary film on Oxford’s life, *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*, based on Mark Anderson’s book, *Shakespeare By Another Name* (2005), and scheduled for release fall 2011.

Thomas Gage, Professor Emeritus at Humboldt State University, delivered an erudite talk, “The Bone in the Elephant’s Heart,” detailing Shakespeare’s debt to Arab-Islamic influences, arguing that this influence has been largely overlooked by contemporary scholars. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of “heteroglossia,” Gage argued that “an Arab-Islamic palimpsest imprinted significantly on the bard’s work,” and observed that “for over a half millennium the European High Middle ages acquired from the Arabs modifications and improvement of ancient Greek intellectual inroads and during the renaissance conflated these into a Classical Heritage.”

Conference regular Dr. Helen Heightsman Gordon discussed Masonic symbolism in *Hamlet* as well as the “texts” of the Southampton Tower Portrait, Jon Benson’s 1640 Sonnets publication, and 1609 Sonnets dedication. Gordon’s 2008 book, *The Secret Love Story in Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, was a finalist in the USA Book News Competition for the “best new non-fiction books.” Her “Symbols in Hamlet and in Portraits of Oxford and Southampton: An Oxfordian Revelation,” explored the ways “Symbols in Elizabethan-era portraits can also reveal what the written record has suppressed or obliterated.”

In his “Bisexuality and Bastardy, *Avisa* and Antonio Pérez,” SOS president John Hamill revisited the debate over the interpretation of several key documents in the authorship question, including the Sonnets and the enigmatic 1594 *Willobie His Avisa*.



**Dr. Felicia Londré leads panel discussion with cast members from *1 Henry IV*, from left to right: James Newcomb (Worcester), Richard Howard (King Henry) and John Tufts (Prince Hal).**

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Hamill has long argued that the close relationship between Oxford and Henry Wriothesley – agreed by almost all scholars to be the “fair youth” of the Sonnets — was a homosexual one that scandalized Elizabethan high society and is at the core of the authorship mystery. Hamill further argued that *Willobie* is a joking roman à clef that appeals to prurient interest about a bisexual love triangle involving Oxford, Wriothesley, and Oxford’s second wife, Elizabeth Trentham.

Hamill sees that triangle mirrored in the Sonnets. This theory provides an alternative to the “Tudor Heir” theory that Southampton was Oxford’s “changeling” son and their relationship is that of a father estranged from his son at birth, but doting on him as a young man, possibly the of royal birth. The latter theory is believed to form the basis in part of the film *Anonymous* (scheduled for release September 2011). Hamill’s presentation was a welcome sign of the healthy debate that continues over these interpretive questions.

R. Thomas Hunter, a financial planner with a PhD in English and American Lit. (another conference regular), spoke on “The Invention of the Human in Shylock.” His talk, which riffed on the title of Harold Bloom’s *Shakespeare and the Invention of the Human*, provided an unusual perspective from which to view a play that is generally regarded as full of troubling issues and has provoked much controversy. Hunter argued that the philosophical position of *Merchant* is often misunderstood, but can be simplified into a seemingly paradoxical yet powerful view: the play is not about an “evil Jew” whose baseness springs from his rejection of Christian values, but is a tragedy about a man who rejects in subtle ways his own Jewish values and traditions. If so, it is consistent with the theory offered by Earl Showerman (below) identifying the original and inspiration for the character in Gaspar Ribiero, who was not a Jew but a “new Christian” who had put aside his Jewish identity in the interest of his business agenda.

Martin Hyatt, Harvard trained biologist and ornithologist (as well as devoted reader and interpreter of the Sonnets), in his “Teaching Heavy Ignorance Aloft to Fly,” provided the audience with a primer on Shakespeare’s use of bird imagery. Hyatt discussed a larger human fascination with birds, including the tradition of equating bird flight and song with the creative impulses of the artist. This influence, Hyatt argued, can be seen throughout literature and the arts: “The seemingly magical qualities of birds, particularly their flight, their song, and their seasonal rhythms, have had an extraordinary impact on the human imagination.... Poetry has often been represented as melodious birdsong or soaring flight and poets have frequently been portrayed as birds.” In keeping with this tradition, both of the “literary bookends” of the Shakespeare mythos – the 1592 *Green’s Groatsworth of Wit* and the 1623 First Folio, compare “Shakespeare” to birds – in *Groatsworth* to a crow and in the Folio to a swan. Hyatt concluded that “understanding the literary traditions involving birds reveals unexpected information about Shakespeare’s authorship.”

Lynne Kositsky, former Fellowship vice-president, Canadian poet and multi-award winning fiction author, provided one of the Conference’s several creative interludes with a reading from her latest published novel, *Minerva’s Voyage*. Published by Dundurn

Press, it is a mystery-suspense story for preteens and teens, based loosely on the 1609 wreck of the *Sea Venture* in Bermuda that many Stratfordians cite as the inspiration for *The Tempest*. Incorporating ciphers and early modern emblems, the novel is “blackly comedic,” departing from the Bermuda narratives of 1609 “before taking a sudden leap into magic and murder.” It has garnered much critical acclaim. A leading literary journal in Canada, *Quill and Quire*, describes it as an “action packed adventure that doesn’t let up from its opening scene. The novel...speeds along at a breakneck pace, building cliffhanger and cliffhanger.” Kositsky has also recently completed, with Roger Stritmatter, a



**One of many advantages of the Ashland venue was the opportunity to hear from members of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the largest Shakespeare Festival in North America. On hand for Conference presentations were actor James Newcomb and OSF Executive Director Paul Nicholson. Newcomb, who played Worcester in this year’s production of *Henry IV Part 1*, and has played Bolingbroke in *Richard II*, Oberon in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and the title role in *Richard III*, among many other leading roles, is an avowed Oxfordian who has frequently spoken to local actors about Oxford as the true author of the Shakespeare canon. Nicholson has been Executive Director of OSF since 1995 and is responsible for all the management aspects of the Festival. He is an open-minded but very public anti-Stratfordian.**



non-fiction scholarly work titled *Shakespeare’s Movable Feast: Sources, Chronology and Design of “The Tempest.”*

Marie Merkel delivered a talk titled “In the Fit of Miming’: A brief history of Sir John Falstaff and the ‘whole school of tongues’ in his belly.” She surveyed the scholarship on the historical (Sir John Oldcastle and Sir John Fastolfe) and literary (Elizabethan vice characters such as “Jack Juggler”) antecedents of the character. With de Vere as author, argued Merkel, a new “high

(Conference, cont. from p. 9)

voltage Falstaff, almost too real to bear, too subtle and complex to fathom, suddenly leaps from the page.” Falstaff’s “school of tongues,” argued Merkel, “includes Shakespeare’s fellow scribblers Lyly and Greene, and a crowd of political figures from William Cecil, Lord Burghley, to William Brooke, Lord Cobham.” Such associates would “have little resonance” in the life of the alleged Stratfordian author, while they can be directly traced in various ways to Oxford’s life.

Donna Stewart and Ron Andronico, the duo comprising the Early Modern music group “Mignarda,” performed several excerpts, mostly for lute and voice, that enlivened the conference and supplied a welcome respite from academic presentations.

Andronico, who has been a professional performer of historical and theatrical music for over 30 years, is the author of *Shakespeare’s Lute Book*, which includes historical music identified in several plays as well as music directly connected to the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. His partner, Donna Stewart, apprenticed with Schola Cantorum for more than a decade, singing Gregorian chant and polyphony from the middle ages onward in their liturgical context. She has performed and recorded with Apollo’s Fire, Cleveland’s renowned baroque orchestra. Among other selections, Mignarda played “My Lord of Oxenforde’s Maske,” a lute arrangement preserved in

the Cambridge University Library manuscript Dd.3.18, and William Byrd’s music set to Oxford’s “My mind to me a kingdom is,” published in Byrd’s 1588 *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs*.

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Doubt. New signatories of note at the conference also included:

Chris Coleman, Artistic Director of Portland Center Stage (one of the most successful urban repertory theatres in the country);

Actor Keir Cutler, PhD;

Christopher Du Val, Assistant Professor of performance at the University of Idaho;

Livia Benise, the Artistic Director of the Camelot Theatre in Ashland;

Felicia Londré, PhD, Professor of Theatre at the University of Missouri;

Stephen Moorer, artistic director of the Pacific Repertory Theatre in Carmel, Ca.;

James Newcomb;

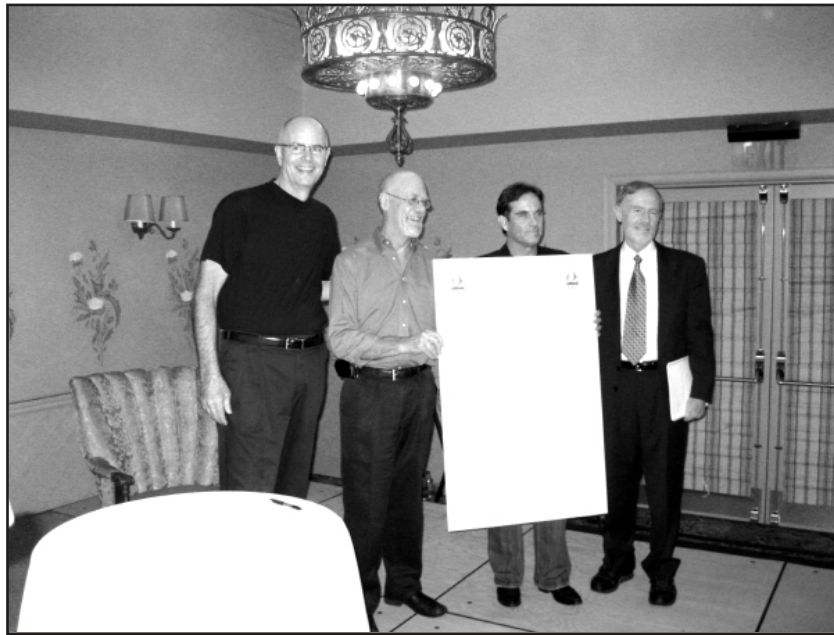
Mary Tooze (a noted Ashland area patron of the arts);

Author Hank Whittemore.

Another local who entertained the conference was OSF actor Robin Goodrin Nordli, creator of the minimalist show, *Bard Babes*, in which she comically plays in sequence a series of Shakespearean leading ladies. In 16 OSF seasons Nordli has performed 49 roles in 38 productions. These include Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*; Hedda Gabler in *Hedda Gabler* and *The Further*

*Adventures of Hedda Gabler*; Roxanne in *Cyrano de Bergerac*; Olivia and Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Margaret in *Henry VI* and *Richard III*; and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*. Her show was witty and entertaining.

William J. Ray, who has studied the authorship issue since 2003, delivered “Proofs of Oxfordian Authorship in the Shakespeare Apocrypha” (see this issue). He argues that four minor poems of the Shakespearean apocrypha “bear a close resemblance to Shakespeare’s first [published] work, *Venus and Adonis*,” and focuses on “Sweet Cytherea sitting by a brook,” published in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599). Ray examined internal linguistic clues to suggest that these apocryphal poems are by de Vere, as they show close stylistic relations to other Shakespearean poetry, and that they deal with Oxford’s love affair (circa 1574) with Queen Elizabeth I. He concludes that this “corroborative evidence confirms that Oxford was the mind behind the pseudonym Shakespeare.”



**At the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt signing (from left to right): Keir Cutler, OSF Executive Director Paul Nicholson, James Newcomb, and Reasonable Doubt Director John Shahan.**

Fellowship Trustee Thomas Regnier continued his examination of law in Shakespeare. Regnier has written a *University of Miami Law Review* article, "Could Shakespeare Think like a Lawyer? How Inheritance Law Issues in *Hamlet* May Shed Light on the Authorship Question." He has taught a course, "Shakespeare and the Law," at the University of Miami Law School, and now teaches at John Marshall Law School in Chicago. His paper, "Hamlet's Law," further explored questions of the legal substructure of the play, in particular the nature of Ophelia's death (suicide or misadventure) and Hamlet's expected inheritance. Although we don't normally think of *Hamlet* as one of the "legal plays" (such as *Measure for Measure* or *Merchant of Venice*), "if we dig beneath the surface.....we will find it as rich in legal treasure as any of Shakespeare's work."

Drawing on the work of several previous theorists of Shakespeare's legal knowledge, Regnier's paper argues that legal questions about inheritance drive much otherwise inexplicable action in the play. Hamlet is preoccupied with the issue of whether he or Claudius has a right to inherit the state, and precise relevant legal terminology may be found in several of his speeches. Similarly, the issue of whether Ophelia died accidentally or killed herself – and the legal consequences of such a determination – are spoofed in the gravedigger scene. That very issue was discussed in *Hales v. Pettit*, a 1562 court case. Written reports of the case were only available during Shakespeare's lifetime in arcane legal French, a form of Norman-English that was the official language of the law courts. "All of this," concludes Regnier, "is difficult to reconcile with the traditional view of the author of the plays as an untutored commoner who became a great playwright by way of a smattering of education and tones of genius. The legal sophistication shown by the author of *Hamlet* suggests that he had training in law that went well beyond what an intelligent amateur could have fathered through a haphazard acquaintance with the law courts...he appears to have had the kind of training in legal studies that was given in Elizabethan days to noblemen at the Inns of Court."

Sam Saunders, PhD in Mathematics and retired Math professor at the University of Washington, revisited his theme of "The Odds on Hamlet's Odds." Saunders notes that commentators since Samuel Johnson have been puzzled by the exact significance of Osric's summary of the rules and the odds of the duel: "The King, Sir, hath laid that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you by three hits; he hath laid twelve for nine." Saunders sets out to resolve a basic question about this passage: "Can it be that the consequent odds are incorrect or is it more likely that this is another case of punctilious exactitude in the canon if the game is correctly understood?"

SF President and Conference Chair Earl Showerman, a graduate of Harvard Medical School and regular contributor to a range of Oxfordian publications, including *Brief Chronicles*, spoke on "Shakespeare's Shylock and the Strange Case of Gaspar Ribiero." The paper presented a compelling case for identifying the origin of the Shylock character as a notorious Portuguese-Jewish converse. [Showerman is indebted to the suggestions of Brian Pullam, Manchester University Professor, who first

proposed the theory.] Ribiero was unpopular with both Jews and Christians in Venice, both for his cantankerous personality and his usurious practices. In 1567 he was sued and found guilty of making a usurious loan to a Jew with a principal amount of 3,000 ducats in connection with a shipping venture. "The Ribiero fam-



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ily," continues Showerman, "dealt in pearls and rubies, and about 1570 Gaspar also managed the Venetian meat supply, which may be reflected in the theme of carnality and the economics of the flesh that permeate *Merchant*."

Dr. Jack Shuttleworth, retired chair of the Humanities Division at the United States Air Force Academy and editor of the Oxfordian edition of *Hamlet* in the series (published under the general editorship of Dr. Daniel Wright and Richard Whalen),

(Continued on p. 12)

*(Conference, cont. from p. 11)*

delivered “*Hamlet* and Its Mysteries: An Oxfordian Editor’s View.” Shuttleworth’s talk was a perfect adjunct to Katherine Chiljan’s “Too early references to *Hamlet*,” which pointed to the existence of numerous hints that some version of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* was on the stage by the early 1590s, if not earlier. To avoid the chronological implications of these references the anomaly is usually explained by invoking the alleged existence of a so-called “Ur-Hamlet,” said to be written by Thomas Kyd. Shuttleworth’s point of departure was the many mysteries, literary and textual, which abound in *Hamlet*. Specifically, he considered the many textual problems resulting from the fact that *Hamlet* exists in three very different original texts, Q1 (1603), Q2 (1604), and F (1623). Among other conclusions, Shuttleworth argued that “In dealing with the dating of the play....the alleged Ur-Hamlet is a fanciful creation of those confined by the Stratfordian chronology and that the *Hamlet* we know is the result of authorial revision over a period of more than 15 years.”

Roger Stritmatter, Associate Professor of Humanities at Coppin State University, also spoke on *Hamlet*. He addressed the preliminary question, “What is the True Composition Order of the Texts of *Hamlet*?” In their influential *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (1997), Wells and Taylor set forth what has become the orthodox answer, based in part on several generations of scholarship, that the correct order of the three texts (somewhat paradoxically) is Q2 → F → Q1, with Q2 being the earliest and Q1 and F “related because the manuscripts behind them in some way shared a common origin,” Q1 being a heavily corrupted descendant of such an exemplar. However, Stritmatter noted that Steven Urkowitz is in the process of completing a book that argues, on the contrary, that Q1 is a preliminary “rough draft” of a play subsequently revised into the versions preserved in Q2 and F. The correct order, suggested Stritmatter, is actually Q1 → F → Q2. Stritmatter proposed to explore the implications of this finding in a future lectures.

Richard Whalen, co-editor with Ren Draya of the 2010 Oxfordian edition of *Othello*, pursued some intriguing linguistic details in his paper, the “Goats and Monkeys” of *Othello*. The curious exclamation, “Goats and Monkeys!” expresses Othello’s outrage at his suspicions of Desdemona’s infidelity. It has provoked little

commentary by orthodox scholars, in spite of the fact that the same surprising association between adultery, goats, and monkeys also occurs earlier in the play. Drawing on the work of Roger Prior, in “Shakespeare’s Visit to Italy” (*The Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies* 9 (2008)), Whalen suggests that the association might be explained by a large fresco, still surviving in Bassano, 20 miles from Venice en route to Padua, which prominently depicts a goat with a monkey crouched close under its chain. Bassano, Whalen notes, was the hometown of the extended Bassano family of musicians who were court musicians to Henry VIII and Elizabeth.

Emilia Bassano moved in the same circles as Oxford, becoming the mistress of Baron Hunsdon, who established the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in its second Elizabethan incarnation in the early 1590s. The image may, alternatively, have been inspired by a lavishly illustrated 14<sup>th</sup> century psalter decorated with many grotesque figures, including a goat and a monkey in a lewd embrace. The psalter appears to have been commissioned by the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Surrey, whose mother was the daughter of Robert de Vere, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford.

Hank Whittemore took an entertaining diversion from his customary focus on the Sonnets in his talk, “The Birth and Growth of Prince Hal: Why did Oxford Write *Famous Victories of Henry V*?” Staged by the Queen’s Men during the 1580s, the play was not published until 1598 (one

of a number of proven cases of delayed publication of theatrical scripts). B.M. Ward in 1925 speculated that it was written originally c. 1574-5, and performed during that Christmas season at court. Ward theorized that it was written as Oxford’s apology to the Queen for fleeing to the Continent during some heated contretemps at court earlier that year. Whittemore sees it rather as an expression of Oxford’s concern about the Elizabethan succession, arguing that Oxford wrote “to warn Elizabeth against ignoring their unacknowledged royal son, the future Henry Wriothesley, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Southampton.”



**Robin Goodrin Nordli in *Twelfth Night*. Photo courtesy of T. Charles Erickson.**

(Ben Jonson, cont. from p. 1)

Usually the setup and the punch are close together so they can create friction and heat, which creates laughter. Occasionally, the punch is delayed to take advantage of a delayed spark, which catches fire when we least expect it and, again, we laugh. Ben Jonson separated the setup

herald's office gives him a coat of arms, of which he is very proud:

Sogliardo. . . .how like you the crest, sir?  
Puntarvolo. I understand it not well, what is't?

Sogliardo. Marry, sir, it is your boar without a head, rampant [standing on hind legs with its forefeet in the air]. A boar without a head, that's very rare!

Carlo Buffone. Ay, and rampant too! Troth, I commend the herald's wit, he has deciphered him well: a swine without a head, without

**The Punch**

Fast-forward 24 years to 1623 and the publication of the First Folio of Shakespeare's, edited by the same Ben Jonson. He writes prefatory remarks to go along with an engraving supposedly of the writer Shakespeare which, mysteriously, say, "Reader, looke not on his picture, but his book." The engraving is by Martin Droeshout, who has gotten a lot of bad press because the face as drawn displays so little character and definition. Marchette Chute says, "If they had been able to pay more they could probably have found a more talented artist."<sup>2</sup> There is some dispute over whether it was Droeshout the elder or Droeshout the younger, but both were competent engravers and did likenesses of other important men which look very professional, so that can't be the problem.

My epiphany came when I realized that, far from being the result of inferior engraving, the picture in the front of the First Folio is a very good work of art done

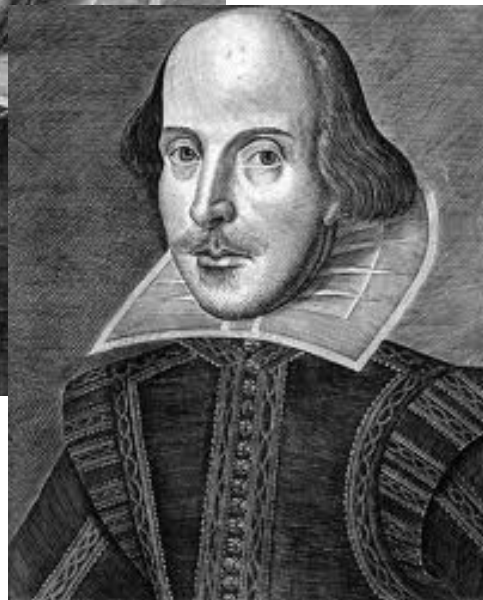
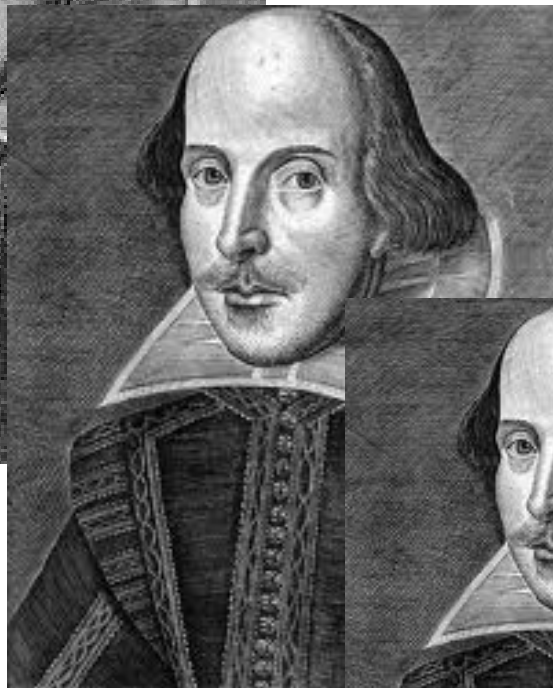
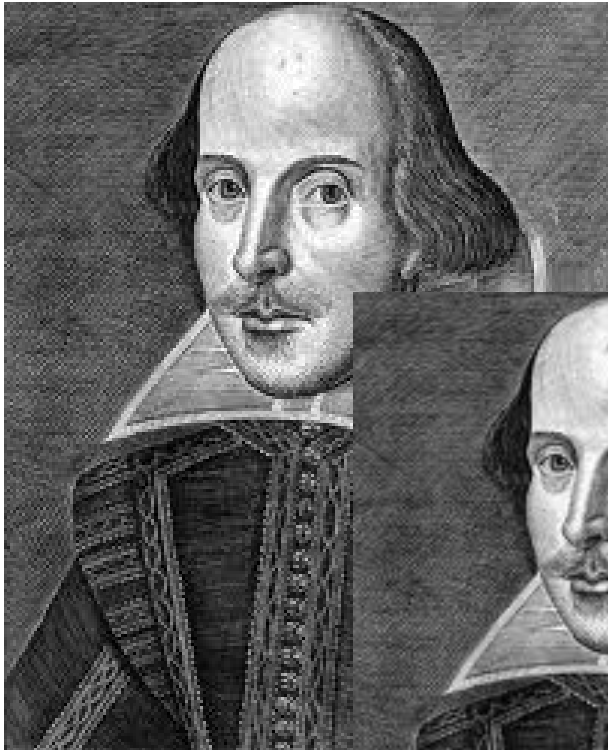
under the careful guidance of Ben Jonson. To fully appreciate it you must be looking at a good reproduction of the image as you read on.

Please note the following oddities:

- The face, although apparently middle-aged, is smooth and without lines.

- The expression is incredibly bland and lifeless and appears mask-like.

- The only lifelike thing about the face is the eyes.
- There is a definite line extending



and the punch of his joke by 24 years, which must be some kind of record. Recently, I awoke to the realization that for a long time I had been looking at the setup and the punch of a great joke by Ben Jonson and hadn't realized they were connected. Then I "got it," and laughed out loud. I hope you will, too.

Get to the point, Ted.

**The Setup**

In his play *Every Man Out of His Humour*, written in 1599, Jonson created a character named Sogliardo, a fool who is desperately in search of respectability and wants to become a gentleman. In those days that meant getting a coat of arms to go on a shield, for which he was not eligible by birth, so he arranges to buy one (political corruption is nothing new). For £30 the

brain, wit, anything indeed, ramping to gentility.<sup>1</sup>

Many Oxfordians, myself included, believe that Jonson's character is a satire on the Stratford man passing himself off as Shakespeare the writer (Oxford), because the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford's crest was a boar. In other words, Sogliardo's crest is Oxford without his head (the creative part).

(Continued on p. 14)

(Ben Jonson, cont. from p. 13)

down from the left ear disappearing under the chin, which looks like the edge of a mask.

- The head is too large for the body and appears to be floating above it on a sort of platter. The neckwear is usually called a ruff but it is definitely not one. It has been referred to by Stratfordian

- The costume does not appear to have a real body inside it, certainly not *his* body, which would be too big. In fact, because it has two left sleeves (on the viewer's right the left sleeve is seen from the front, on the viewer's left the same sleeve is seen from the back), it would be impossible for a person to get into it. It appears to be an empty

missing head from Sogliardo's coat of arms, served up on a platter just as boar's heads were traditionally served up on banquet tables at that time. All that's missing is an apple in its mouth. At that point I had a good laugh at Ben Jonson's great joke. Had Oxford been alive at the time, I'll bet he would have fallen on the floor.

The remaining question is why? Aside from the sheer pleasure in making a great joke, why did Ben Jonson choose this strange way to illustrate the front of Shakespeare's First Folio? After all, he had done his own folio in 1616 and didn't use a picture. I propose that he chose this particular artistic device not only to tell us that the author's real identity was being hidden, but also to reveal exactly who the hidden author was to anyone clever enough and knowledgeable enough to get the connections—and the joke.

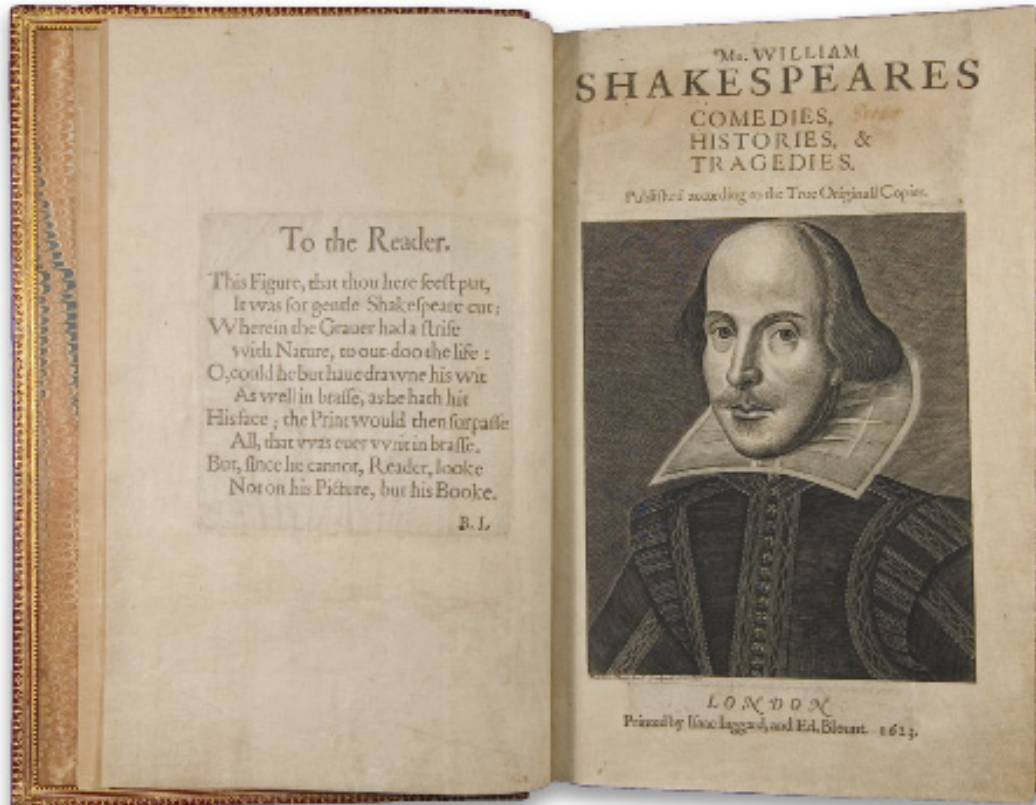
### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Jonson, Ben. "Everyman Out of His Humour," 3.1, *The Works of Ben Jonson*, Edited by William Gifford, Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1853.

<sup>2</sup>Chute, Marchette. *Shakespeare of London* (New York: E. P. Dutton Co., 1949), 332

<sup>3</sup>Nicholl, Charles. *The lodger Shakespeare: his life on Silver Street* (New York: Viking, 2008), 168.

<sup>4</sup> [www.william-shakespeare.info/william-shakespeare-collar-theory.htm](http://www.william-shakespeare.info/william-shakespeare-collar-theory.htm)



**The Droeshout engraving in the 1623 folio, accompanied by Jonson's explicit but rarely observed instruction (you'd think after four hundred years, the Stratfordians would "get it," but having a sense of humor is apparently not a requirement for obtaining a PhD in English Lit.):**

**"Reader, looke/Not on his Picture, but his Booke."**

Charles Nicholl as a "stiff, tray-like collar."<sup>3</sup>

- The platter is in the shape of a shield. (There is a website which has a vivid demonstration of this shield.<sup>4</sup>)

costume — no body.

I suddenly realized that what I was looking at was an engraving of a head without a body, concealed behind a theatrical mask which has hair attached. He is looking out at us through the eye-holes. The head is sitting on a platter which is shaped like a shield. This is the boar's (Oxford's)

*(Sweet Cytherea, cont. from p. 1)*

Under these circumstances, those who credit Oxford as the mind behind the name "Shakespeare" must build their evidence from logical deduction, similar phrasing and poetic devices, biographical allusion, vocabulary, allegorical reference, and a combination of previously disparate sources.

Those investigative techniques apply to any author's unprovenanced writings. Should they link an unattributed work to Francois Marie Arouet, for instance, which would mean a simultaneous link to his pseudonym Voltaire, it would be a red-letter day for literature.

With "Shakespeare," the consequences are not so simple. They are revolutionary. They would revise a good deal of formulaic Elizabethan political history and also would shame the Stratford-born-Bard tradition that followed in its wake.

In the course of four centuries the shadowy "Shakespeare" has become sanctified as a demigod. T.S. Eliot wrote, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the world. There is no third," the inference being the two were transcendent, superhuman. The Stratford narrative's Hero represents the far-reaching possibilities of the human spirit, whatever one's social station.

Doubters recognize the potential of an artist of any class to reach universality. But they question orthodoxy's utter, defiant faith in the Stratford origins, given the royal context of the entire canon. The narrative strikes skeptics as a set of irreconcilable biographical contradictions that make for an implausible model by which to understand artistic work.

On the other side of the question, Stratfordians agree with Winston Churchill, who is remembered as saying, "I don't like to have my myths tampered with" (Ogburn, *Mysterious*, 162). Hardly an English department in the world recognizes Shakespeare authorship studies. Contemporary critical literature does not consider the authorship question to be an area of legitimate scholarship, but rather shocking poor manners, a judgment influenced perhaps by the unspoken anthropological laws that proscribe iconoclasm, sacrilege, heresy, treason, subversions large and small, public scatology, and sexual outrage.

Any proposal that the Earl of Oxford, the maverick genius close to Elizabeth I, wrote these striking works disturbs the tradition that Stratford's uneducated commoner rose from obscurity, impressed into print eternal understanding that rivals the Bible, made a bundle doing it, and, duty done, returned to rural simplicity, leaving the compulsions of art behind.

As *mythos* the story evokes Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* patched onto the artistic vocation. Stratford's Gulielmus Shakspeare never gave any evidence of being a writer, but it remains his legacy.

How to counter lore and legend endorsed by academia? As Buckminster Fuller



**How to counter lore and legend endorsed by academia? As Buckminster Fuller said, by showing a model that works. But there we encounter psychological habit. Every Oxford-favoring evidentiary advance jars a region of our social unconscious, the need that established heroes endure. We know the impulse very well from our children wishing, even demanding, the same story be read in the same way every night before bed.**



said, by showing a model that works. But there we encounter psychological habit. Every Oxford-favoring evidentiary advance jars a region of our social unconscious, the need that established heroes endure. We know the impulse very well from our children wishing, even demanding the same story be read in the same way every

night before bed. Myth comforts all the ages. The attachment to illogical belief does not fade merely because contrary facts accumulate.

Given the human predisposition for stability, the best course to finding the mind behind "Shakespeare" is to let the probative evidence cumulatively show elements of an actual biography and history, and the counterfeit will dissolve, leaving us a mainly artistic tragedy: The noble who could not be King, or even be credited, becoming uncrowned Legislator to the world.

The present goal is more modest. I will apply comparative analysis to prove the Shakespearean narrative *Venus and Adonis* is the creation, of which Oxford's "Sweet Cytherea" and its sibling sonnets in *The Passionate Pilgrim* were embryonic ideas. In the later work he abandoned the compressed sonnet form and, like a modern Ovid, loftily held poetry itself eternal and the expedient world fleeting and coarse.

If Oxford wrote these works of "Shakespeare," it follows that Stratford Shakspeare's name usefully overlapped with Oxford's stage mask in a cultural/political strategy to gain permanence for the First Folio, but left us to unravel the money-lender's fictive, now 400-year-old, notoriety.

## **Two Problems of the Stratfordian Attribution**

### **I. Ignorance Bifurcates Meaning From Origin**

We recognize at the outset that *The Passionate Pilgrim's* sonnets (of which "Sweet Cytherea" is numbered IV) are not high Shakespeare. That is one reason they are stored by most Shakespeare editors in a literary basement called "Minor Poems." Some reappear in the canon: I-III, and V of *The Passionate Pilgrim* and II of "Sonnets to Sundrie Notes of Music" are credited as the Bard's (Feuillerat 185). The rest appear in every new edition as apocrypha. The poetic style throughout is felicitous rather than profound, so scholars and readers easily can miss the Cytherea/Venus poems as primary evidence in the creative evolution of the Shakespeare canon.

(*Sweet Cytherea*, cont. from p. 15)

As an example of missed evidence, the longest Minor Poem, “A Lover’s Complaint,” is integral to *The Sonnets*, with which it was published in 1609, because it extends the theme of eye and heart, reason and desire, and completes *The Sonnets’* Pythagorean numerology (Fowler 183-97).

A useful key to its significance is that numerical continuity. The “Complaint” narrative comprises 47 stanzas, seven lines each. It cannot be coincidental that Sonnet 47’s eye and heart theme is followed exactly one hundred sonnets later with Sonnet 147’s variation on it, reason and desire. According to Plutarch, Euclid’s Theorem #47, describing the perfect 3-4-5 Pythagorean triangle, symbolizes the Osiris-Isis-Horus/Apollo myth. It provides that ancient parable with a geometric analog. Both myth and triangle symbolize Creation’s inherent conflict and, to us, its miraculous result: Increase. The square of the hypotenuse (progeny) equals the combined squares of the vertical (male) and horizontal (female) sides. “Increase” is the last word of the first line of *The Sonnets*. The theme of Increase superscribes the work and is its metaphoric frame.

But “A Lover’s Complaint” remains occluded from notice. So does “Sweet Cytherea.” Neither fits the Stratford narrative.

## II. *Passionate Pilgrim* Dating Evidence Does Not Support the Stratfordian Narrative

The Stratford narrative cannot explain the fact that the composition date of the poems is too early for Shakspeare. *The Passionate Pilgrim’s* 1599 publication date and its “W. Shakespeare” author line do not prove Shakspeare wrote the attributed poems. For example, “Whenas thine eye hath chose the dame” first appeared in the 1590-era commonplace book labelled “MSS POEMS BY VERE EARL OF OXFORD &C” (“Shakespeare” Vol II 369-79). Shall we accept that the twenty-five-year-old Shakspeare, newly arrived in London, composed a courtly poem that was then copied by hand in an aristocrat’s daughter’s commonplace book with Vere’s name on the spine? Believers operate on the assumption it could (or had to) have happened, if they are impelled to take note.

Setting aside the circular reasoning required -- that Shakspeare’s early poem showed up anonymously in a handwritten book of miscellaneous poems because he



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was in London at the time — *The Passionate Pilgrim* sonnets themselves are exactly what they look like, late 1580s erudite pastoral experiments derived stylistically from the courtly romance tradition, but brazen beyond any previous Tudor litera-

ture. They are impossible to rectify with the Stratford biography. Commoners did not portray the Queen lying on her back without facing serious consequences.

Rather than accept *a priori* assumptions, let us inquire whether the word use in “Sweet Cytherea,” together with its choice of subjects and dramatis personae, specific classical learning, and concealed author-identifications show up again in the texts of “Shakespeare.”

Two proofs are necessary: first, that Oxford really wrote “Sweet Cytherea,” which should be easy because he left his initials all over it; and second, that features of *Venus and Adonis* are so substantially similar to “Sweet Cytherea” and other Oxfordian poems that they must have come from the same pen.

## The Pitch

“Sitting alone...”

We search first for covert self-identities in “Sitting alone upon my thought in melancholy mood,” a poem which we know Oxford wrote. His name is in it. Then we compare the naming devices and styles in “Sitting alone” to “Sweet Cytherea,” and the two poems to *Venus and Adonis*. From the sheer number of name clues elsewhere in Oxford’s work such as Ignoto [ignotus=unknown, O=Oxford], Ever [verE] or Never, Emet [Hebrew=Truth=Veritas], Pasquill [nOpen] Cavillero [il vier O=he is Vere Oxford], and Will O Be (Avisa), we infer he wanted his authorship to be recognized by the knowing and by posterity. In later years, he hinted to his surname Vere and title Earl of Oxford with various devices and allusions.

In “Sitting alone,” Oxford used the echo device uniquely as a kind of sibyl to dramatically tell the “truth,” the English equivalent to Latin’s *veritas*, a pun on Vere and part of his family motto, *Vero nihil verius*, “Nothing truer than truth.” In the third stanza the echo resounds four “Vere’s. There is no more definite evidence for Vere’s “true” self-identification than “Vere” (pronounced *vair*) echoing across the hills in the poem four [in German, *vier*] times. [Italics added below]



Sitting alone upon my thought in melancholy mood (Echo Verses)

Sitting alone upon my thought in melancholy mood,  
In sight of sea, and at my back an ancient hoary wood,  
I saw a fair young lady come, her secret fears to wail,  
Clad all in color of a nun, and covered with a veil;  
Yet (for the day was calm and clear) I might discern her face,  
As one might see a damask rose hid under crystal glass.

Three times, with her soft hand, full hard on her left side she knocks,  
And sigh'd so sore as might have mov'd some pity in the rocks;  
From sighs and shedding amber tears into sweet song she brake,  
When thus the echo answered her to every word she spake:

[Ann Vavasour's Echo]

Oh heavens! who was the first that bred in me this fever? *Vere.*  
Who was the first that gave the wound whose fear I wear for ever? *Vere.*  
What tyrant, Cupid, to my harm usurps thy golden quiver? *Vere.*  
What sight first caught this heart and can from bondage it deliver? *Vere.*

Yet who doth most adore this sight, oh hollow caves tell *true*? *You.*  
What nymph deserves his liking best, yet doth in sorrow rue? *You.*  
What makes him not reward good will with some reward or ruth? *Youth.*  
What makes him show besides his birth, such pride and such *untruth*? *Youth.*

May I his favour match with love, if he my love will try? *Ay.*  
May I requite his birth with faith? Then faithful will I die? *Ay.*

And I, that knew this lady well,  
Said, Lord how great a miracle,  
To her how *Echo* told the *truth*,  
As *true* as *Phoebus'* oracle.

(“Shakespeare,” Vol I, 560-1)

The four “Vere’s” clearly allude to the author’s name. But one diaphora, *i.e.*, name repetition device, does not prove that Oxford wrote the poem. So we search for a continued pattern in the following verses. Is the second echo, “you,” Oxfordian as well? Yes. In the first era of printing, enunciation was still a source for punning. By vocalizing and extending its vowel sounds, “you” enunciates as *yEEE-OOOu*. The palate and tongue can’t form the sound of *yooou* without first vocalizing a phantom *ee*. And EO is the initialing for Earl of Oxford. Similarly “youth” in the following verses vocalizes as *yEEE-OOOth*, again the EO signature. In total, there are four ‘Vere’s and four embedded ‘EO’s.

By another form of covert EO-punning — foreign language homonyms — the affirmative “Ay” identifies Oxford as the author and culprit of the dramatic action. How is this conveyed? In addition to meaning “yes,” “Ay” is the vocalization of “I,” the English first person singular pronoun. This gets us nowhere in English, but the Italian equivalent of I, ‘io,’ is pronounced *EEE’-oh*, another embedded EO cue. Oxford was fluent in Italian.

In October 1584 an angry Oxford wrote to his former warder Cecil, “I am that I am,” or, in Italian, “Io sono che io sono,” the pun of io=EO making a private joke as Oxford defiantly rebuked him with the English bible reference. Note that “sono” is a possible allusion to the fact that Oxford was the Son or heir, another reprimand to Cecil, who was a commoner before Elizabeth’s entitlement upon him in order to facilitate the Edward de Vere-Anne Cecil marriage.

Recapitulating, in “Sitting alone,” there are four/*vier* ‘Vere’

sounds (as in French, pronounced *vair*), four ‘EO’ [*yeee-ooou*] sounds, and two AY[=I=“io”=EO] references. These sets total ten, “10” in Arabic numerals, making a further pun, this one between the orthographically identical Phoenician letter and Arabic number symbolisms, to make one more name-play [10=IO=EO] hidden in the text.

There is a third meaningful Oxfordian reference concerning this little word “io,” one rooted in Greek mythology. What deity was associated with the Bosphorus Straits, connecting the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea: the goddess Io. Zeus disguised Io as an ox to protect her from Hera. As an ox she swam the Straits to safety. “Bosphorus” means ox-ford, “bos” for bovines generally and the root “por” for passage, which became “ford” in English. We can assume that both Io and Bosphorus were talismanic for the Earl of Oxford, as they tell of Io=EO and Bosphorus=Ox-ford being divinely hidden from the whims of the sovereign mistress.

Another way to understand the communication embedded



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in the I=io=EO formulation is as an abbreviated Latin sentence, E(go) O. This says simply, “I am O,” or “I am Nothing,” invoking the Vere motto, Nothing truer than truth=zero=0=O. Both identity devices, O and Nothing, recur as Oxfordian name-clues in the Shakespeare canon.

No other English author so based his identity, even his sanity, on words, their sounds and their history. He couldn’t rely on his personal relationships for the truth. When we understand the canon as the work of a supreme wordsmith, in an eerie way striving like the lame blacksmith Hephaistos to make the metals ring true, it is necessary to remember that Oxford thought, as James Joyce did, in several languages — English, French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Hebrew, and Dutch/German. Derivations, inventions, and cross-puns arose constantly.

New words, images, colors, constructions inevitably create new visions of reality, and particularly rise from the extreme

(Continued on p. 18)

(*Sweet Cytherea*, cont. from p. 17)

psychological type that would include artists such as Oxford and Vincent Van Gogh. Their psychic receptivity compares with Rousseau's, souls living without a skin between self and circumstance, experiencing life at the unstable margin of sanity and madness. The pendulum swing between pain and hilarity in the comedies serves as a theatrical metaphor.

Our range of understanding what is humanly true owes



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much to these artists' mortal struggles for evocative conceptions. Ironically, their fates intersected in 1876, when Van Gogh visited Hampton Court, site of Holbein's drawings and the royal portraits, including Gheerhardt's "Portrait of an Unknown Woman," the pregnant Elizabeth, displaying an Oxford cartouche in the lower right corner of the canvas (Portrait: Altrocchi, 291; Visit: Stone, 9).

### Summary of Name-Clues

And I, that knew this lady well,  
Said, Lord how great a miracle,  
To her how Echo told the truth,  
As true as Phoebus' oracle.

Vere's embedded name and title are communicated by devices integral to stanza 3, namely the echo, the play on "Vere" and "truth," the hidden allusions of "ay=I=io=EO," and the you(th)=EO encoding. The final stanza, above, puts those devices in a bottle for history. The narrator's English "I" equals the Italian "I," io, in turn evoking EO. In Latin, E(go) O=I am O. By arithmetic association, O equals Nothing. The letters *E* and *o* also conscribe the name Echo.

This stanza has a third entendre: Echo is close to the German *echt*, which means "genuine." The word found its way into idiomatic Tudor English as "eke" or "eche" with the sense of "really" or "quite." Thus, "Echo told the truth" dramatizes the equation, Echo/*echt*/the genuine equals the truth, or conversely, Nothing [O] truer than truth.

And the bridging verb "told," though strained here as a transitive verb, when converted to its homonym "tolled" bearing the meaning of "knell," emerges as an etymological descendant of the Latin/Italian "anello," evoking the circular shape and sound of "ring." Echo told/tolled/knelled=anello=rang "the truth." The O shape of a ring, like a bell's or well's circumference, connotes circle-zero-nothing-0. O is the initial for Oxford, This is a major cipher for the writer, hidden in plain sight and most evident when repeated. The word "ring" takes meaning as both transitive verb and noun, as in the idiom "the ring of truth." The closing simile, "As true as Phoebus [Apollo's] oracle," the Delphic Oracle, adduces the sun god's shrine of the prophetic Truth, and thereby adds a holy allusion to Vere/veritas.

With that primer in Oxfordian wordplay and name-clues, we are prepared for understanding "Sweet Cytherea." [Italics added below]

### Oxfordian Name Clues in "Sweet Cytherea"

Sonnet IV, *The Passionate Pilgrim*: Sweet Cytherea

Sweet Cytherea, sitting by a brook  
With young Adonis, lovely, fresh, and green,  
Did court the lad with many a lovely look,  
Such looks as none could look but beauty's queen.  
She told him stories to delight his ear;  
She showed him favors to allure his eye;  
To win his heart, she touch'd him here and there,  
Touches so soft still conquer chastity.  
But whether unripe years did want conceit,  
Or he refused to take her figured proffer,  
The tender nibbler would not touch the bait,  
But smile and jest at every gentle offer:

Then fell she on her back, *fair queen*, and toward:  
He rose and ran away; ah, fool too *froward!*

(Feuillerat 116-17)

The word “sweet” connoted “heavenly” in Tudor speech, as in a perfume’s ethereal essence. We would expect a goddess to be a vibrational level or two above the ordinary, but this does not give us a name-clue. “Cytherea” does. The Greek goddess Cytherea derives from Cythera, an island in the Peloponnese where Venus’s Greek equivalent, Aphrodite, was born and where the ancients collected the purple dye murex from mollusk beds. Murex has been closely associated with the royal purple for millennia. The island’s original name was Porphyrysa, *The Purple*. The poem ties the protagonist Cytherea inextricably to love, beauty, and Queenly royalty.

Cythera’s Greek root *therios* means “animality,” the animal universe. In the sonnet Cytherea is a passionate (even relentless) sexual creature, a force of nature. Both “Sweet Cytherea” and *Venus and Adonis* hark back to Ovid’s Venus in *The Metamorphoses*, who was so heated she had “forgotten Cythera’s flowery island” (Hughes 130) and her purple-robed royal dignity. So does Cytherea.

Cytherea is a near homonym to Cynthia, the goddess most associated besides Diana with Elizabeth, both deities of the moon and chase. Adonis as the short-lived Sun is the perfect celestial counterpart to the moon goddess. It is his fate that after the chase they must be transitory mates.

Cytherea sits with Adonis by “a brook.” It has been proposed that in 1562 Oxford adopted the pseudonym Arthur [“A”] Brooke, as the male [O]x, “rother,” resembled the sound of Arthur, and Brooke was akin to the “ford” of Ox-ford, when he wrote his youthful narrative *Romeus and Juliet*. The early work has a similar plot, characters, and setting to the Shakespearean play *Romeo and Juliet*. “Brook” also alludes to Oxford’s barony, Bulbec, ‘bull-brook.’ Indeed, when Ford in *Merry Wives of Windsor* takes an assumed name, it is Brooke.

In the next line, Adonis is described first as “young.” From “Sitting alone,” we saw that the “you” and “youth” words if lengthened became *yeee-ooou* and *yeee-*

*oooth*, the *e* and *o* being identifying initials for Earl of Oxford. The same principle applies to young *yeee-ooong* in “Sweet Cytherea.” The modern Liverpool accent retains this elongated pronunciation with a concluding ‘g’ stop.

Young Adonis, Oxford’s protagonist, is a sun god, a repeated figure in his iconography. One of Oxford’s juvenilia was entitled “Song to Apollo” (“Shakespeare” Vol I 613). His epithet Phoebus Apollo, Delphi’s patron deity of the prophetic word, appears in “Sitting alone” after a triple entendre involving the Vere name, as discussed above.



‘Portrait of an Unknown Woman’ by  
Gheerhardts, ca 1600  
Hampton Court Renaissance Gallery.

**Elizabeth I is depicted in maternity garb with a Turkish silk gown. The portrait was evidently commissioned by the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, whose poem is displayed in the lower right hand corner cartouche. By the time of the painting, Elizabeth was sixty-seven. Her face and figure were taken from earlier portraits. The broad outline of the dress before over-painting is still visible as blue sketchy lines. There has never been an official explanation for the maternity depiction.**

And *I* [io] that knew this lady well  
Said, Lord how great a miracle,  
To her how *Echo* [E-O/echt] told the *truth* [Vere],  
As *true* [Vere] as Phoebus [Apollo’s] oracle.

Adonis the sun god in “Sweet Cytherea” reappears intact in *Venus and Adonis*. The author chose Ovid’s quotation in *Venus and Adonis*, which invokes another favored sun deity, Apollo.

Adonis is inferred in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 33 where the author’s briefly seen son (explicitly called “my Sunne”) and the short-lived sovereign sun, Adonis, are virtually the same object of worship.

The young Adonis is “lovely,” meaning elevated beauty rather than our word “pretty.” “Love” rhymed with “prove,” using a long *ooo* inflection, not the modern short *u*. This makes it *loooove*, like *yeee—oooth* (Sonnet 32), but doesn’t help to locate a name clue. However, in the typography of the word “love,” we find that lead. The very shape of “V” played a critical role in Vere acrostics from his youth onward. (e.g., *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, 34-6) In the word “love,” the characteristic Vere letter V is embedded between E and O, which may help explain why “love” had such meaning to the Sonnets author that he used it more than 200 times in a collection of verse that openly proclaimed itself the monument to a “fair” [i.e., Vere] *yeee-oooth*.

“Love” appears too many times in The Sonnets (an average of once per ten lines) for aesthetic balance and effect. Poets never strain an abstraction. The author was writing not solely as a poet. He was implanting his family badge strategically throughout the anonymous work, as the medieval artisans buried their prayers in the ribs and vaults of Europe’s cathedrals.

(Continued on p. 20)

(*Sweet Cytherea*, cont. from p. 19)

Vocal allusions, though plausible, are too ephemeral to be decisive evidence. We have only two words left in the introductory quatrain to gain clear proof of Vere's covert signature. We need something unequivocal, comparable to film director Alfred Hitchcock getting on the Union Street bus in the first scene of *Vertigo*.

These last two words are "fresh" and "green," definitive Vere puns. "Fresh" in Dutch is *vers*, a near anagram for Vere. "Green" in Spanish is *verde*, a reverse anagram for de Vere. Oxford served in the Low Countries and probably knew some Dutch, and he spoke fluent Spanish, as did much of his courtly audience. Five



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of the seven words in the line are Vere identifiers, six of eight if "brook" counts, too high a percentage for random occurrence. In addition to vocal allusions, Oxford used foreign language puns on his name to secretly emblazon "Sweet Cytherea."

Let us go on to the character similarities between the poem and *Venus and Adonis*. The mythological Adonis is beloved of Venus, the moon goddess. He is slain by a boar, the Vere crest animal, denoted in Latin as *verres*, another near homonym of Vere. His downfall with the boar (which represents carnal increase) is much more explicit in *Venus and Adonis* than in *The Passionate Pilgrim* sonnets, although Sonnet IX prefaces the epic poem's temerity. In sum, we see the same hunting avocation, the

same tryst with an older woman, and the same bond with wild and perfect nature, the boar included, in the earlier sonnet as in *Venus and Adonis*.

Moving to the fourth line, the older woman of the poem is "beauty's queen," the highest rank of royalty. Both words in the phrase are germane to Elizabeth, who was literarily personified as *Beauty*, capital B, as well as *Venus*, *Diana*, *Cynthia*, and the *Moon*.

In the obscure epithet "Cytherea," the author has pulled together an aural allusion to Cynthia, the Elizabethan-favored goddess of the moon; a mythological association with Venus and Aphrodite, goddesses of love; and a geographic reference (Cythera Island) to the Purple, so characteristic of royalty. The sonnet's crowning symbolism is that Moon meets Sun, a classical celestial archetype, but here the short-lived sun, Adonis, flees, which has a literary parallel in *The Metamorphoses*, but also an historical one. Oxford escaped to the Continent in 1571 and 1574 under mysterious circumstances. Elizabeth ordered him back.

This raises a critical biographical issue. It would be naïve to interpret "Sweet Cytherea" as literary exercise, an afternoon's poetic doodling, which seems to be James Shapiro's astounding contention in *Contested Will* regarding the entire Shakespearean canon. The poem vividly depicts a believable event couched allegorically as mythology. At some point we have to deal with the historical and biographical rather than simply the folkloric Elizabeth. She was not a Virgin Queen. She had an active social life, primarily with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Credible contemporary documents suggest she had an affair with Oxford circa 1574. Foreign observers referred to her as promiscuous. Her willfulness as the symbolic Virgin Queen became a personal tragedy and ended her dynasty. We get some idea of what Elizabeth's pretense cost her from the royal portraits. The godly personifications imprisoned her in a beautiful cage. Demystifying the historical construct "Virgin Queen" and the parallel literary construct "Shakespeare" will clear the way to finding the truth of the early English nation-state.

### **Anadiplosis and the Greek Rhetorical Curriculum**

The next Oxford identifier in "Sweet Cytherea" is the skillful use of the classical Greek poetic and rhetorical device, anadiplosis, i.e., a line's end-word repeated in the beginning of the next line. We read it in the repetitions of the word "look" in lines three and four, and "touch" in lines seven and eight. The adjective "lovely" in lines two and three is another repetition, but is not strictly anadiplosis. Strict anadiplosis does occur in Oxford's "Grief of Mind," published in *England's Parnassus* (1600):

What plague is greater than the grief of mind?

What plague is greater than the grief of mind?  
The grief of mind that eats in every vein;  
In every vein that leaves such clots behind;  
Such clots behind as breed such bitter pain;  
So bitter pain that none shall ever find,  
What plague is greater than the grief of mind.

E. of Ox ("Shakespeare" I: 599)

In "Sweet Cytherea" Oxford used another Greek device, anaphora, a repeated word or phrase at the beginning of a line: *she told him, she showed him, she touched him*, in lines five, six, and seven. The completing phrases *To delight his ear, to allure his eye*, and *to win his heart* occur in the same lines, setting up a contrapuntal musical or rhythmic motif.

Oxford was at home with the Greek poetics curriculum. Compare his anaphoric "Rejected Lover" with a stanza from *Lucrece*:

The Rejected Lover

And let her feel the power of all your might,  
And let her have her most desire with speed,  
And let her pine away both day and night,  
And let her moan and none lament her need,  
And let all those that shall her see  
Despise her state and pity me.

(Feuillerat I:155)

*Lucrece*, stanza 141:

Let him have time to tear his curled hair,  
Let him have time against himself to rave,  
Let him have time of Time's help to despair,  
Let him have time to live a loathed slave,  
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave,  
And time to see one that by alms doth live  
Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.

(Ibid)

The disinterested reader would conclude that the same author wrote both works. Allowing for different focus and tone, the two poems are nearly twins — the pulse, the melancholy, the articulated cry of outrage, the perfectly resolved last lines.

It can be construed that in "Sweet Cytherea," Oxford used anadiplosis in an attenuated form with the serial "she" and "to" phrases [*to allure his eye...to win his heart*, et. al.], or that the repetitions could be called modified anaphora, in that the repeated phrase does not always occur at the beginning as in traditional anaphora. The point is that he was so familiar with the devices that he could gracefully incorporate their repetitive power into a further device, the "Shakespearean sonnet." The latter was a family invention, as Oxford's uncle Henry Howard, with Thomas Wyatt, formed it from European antecedents. Oxford employed it with admirable skill.

As for the sonnet form itself, the six-line resolution of the eight-line Shakespearean sonnet argument, and its ten-syllable meter, are respective doublings of the 3-4-5 Pythagorean triangle (Chiasson and Rogers 48-64). The sonnet's inherent numerical structure descends from Italian, Euclidean, and Platonic antecedents. It thus adopts classical principles of harmony and proportion implicit to nature, which the Pythagorean triangle

represents geometrically.

These poems did not come out of nothing. They are not phenomenal magic. They manifest an extensive literary foreground studying and mastering the Italian and classical educational traditions. To delve further into the Greek poetics curriculum as a source for understanding the Oxford-"Shakespeare" connection, there are in "The Rejected Lover," above, in *Lucrece* (lines 1839-44), and in Sonnet 66, three examples of polysyndeton, i.e., repetition of a conjunction ("And"). We have seen that diaphora, repeating a name or name cue, appeared in Oxford's "Sitting alone," and that "Sweet Cytherea" features several uses of anaphora and ana-



**The disinterested reader would conclude that the same author wrote both works. Allowing for different focus and tone, the two poems are nearly twins — the pulse, the melancholy, the articulated cry of outrage, the perfectly resolved last lines. It can be construed that in "Sweet Cytherea," Oxford used anadiplosis in an attenuated form with the serial "she" and "to" phrases... or that the repetitions could be called modified anaphora, in that the repeated phrase does not always occur at the beginning as in traditional anaphora...he was so familiar with the devices that he could gracefully incorporate their repetitive power into a further device, the "Shakespearean sonnet."**



diplosis. Oxford wrote both poems. The polysyndeton recurring in "The Rejected Lover," *Lucrece*, and Sonnet 66 reinforces the deduction that their author knew the Greek poetics curriculum.

The pure skill involved confirms thereby that the "Shakespearean" author who knew Greek rhetoric *ipso facto* had more learning than "small Latin and less Greek," the meager educational background traditionally attributed to the Stratfordian author. In any case, that famous phrase was not a reference to Shakespeare's brilliance despite a limited education. It was a conditional sentence to praise the superiority of the author over his 1580s contemporaries, *even if* he had had ["though thou hadst"] "small Latin and

(Continued on p. 22)

(*Sweet Cytherea, cont. from p. 21*)

less Greek.” He did *not* have that lesser level of education, which was the point of the immediately following praise: that he compared favorably with the ancients. In short, he would have been great without the classical training he obviously had.

A grounding in the Classics underpinned education for the Elizabethan elite. Latin was their language of discourse. In dedications to him, Edward de Vere was frequently hailed as the culture’s learned exponent. He received praise from Arthur Golding, Lawrence Nowell, and Thomas Smith, all renowned scholars. His warder William Cecil made Theobalds a nobleman’s academy that considered the rhetorical arts crucial factors in sustaining law, learning, statecraft, and oratory.

Our crucial evidentiary question is how and where does this telltale Greek repetitive device, anadiplosis, appear in the Shakespeare canon? We don’t have to look far. The anadiplosis of “Sweet Cytherea” and “Grief of Mind” also occurs in Act 1.2 of *Comedy of Errors*, an early Shakespearean play:

She is so hot because the meat is cold;  
The meat is cold because you come not home;  
You come not home because you have no stomach:  
You have no stomach having broke your fast;  
But we that know what ’tis to fast and pray  
Are penitent for your default to-day.

(French 1.2.47-52)

Similarly, the anaphoric “Let” found in “The Rejected Lover” is matched almost perfectly in *Lucrece*. “Let” is also the lead (and anaphoric) word featured in “The Phoenix and the Turtle.”

Anaphora beginning with “To” in “Sweet Cytherea” is repeated in *Lucrece*, using the preposition at two points (lines 940-60, 981-94). *Lucrece* uses a number of other anaphoric lead words — *What, O, Or, Guilty, No, Thy, My, Thou, This, He* and *She*. The device receives extensive use as lead words in *Venus and Adonis* — *O, Or, His, To, He, She, This, It* and *It shall*.

In “Sweet Cytherea” anadiplosis is not used throughout, but has an episodic rhythmic character like musical counterpoint. Nor are the other devices, perhaps indicating the mature writer’s freedom from his early lessons. The capacity to

innovate proves the former student had become an artist.

I have emphasized anadiplosis because Oxford was one of the very few Elizabethan writers who used it. Anadiplosis was not widespread in English Renaissance poetry. For one thing, it can be an oppressive device that takes up any expressive oxygen in a poem. Only the most agile talent can maintain it and still convey fresh meaningfulness. Anadiplosis appears in Oxford’s “Grief of Mind”; in *Hekatompathia*, putatively by Thomas Watson, an Oxford associate; in Thomas Kyd, another Oxford associate; and in *Lo-crime*, an anonymous work from the same



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period of time that numerous high-quality anonymous works were being published.

*Willobie His Avis*a was an exception to the anonymous trend, ascribed to a “Henry Willobie,” but it may well have been written by Oxford. The title is comprehensible as an Oxfordian pun. The name “Will-O-bie” explicitly cues us to who Will be: O. “His Avis” is a contraction of the French idiom “La Reine s’avisera,” which means “the Queen declined comment” or “took under advisement,” *i.e.*, she euphemistically refused (De Luna 97-8). He omitted from “avisera” the “ER” initials standing for Elizabeth Regina. Oxford spoke French fluently.

Although Sidney, Dyer, Lodge, and

Spenser all employed anadiplosis, their results cannot be mistaken for “Shakespeare’s. The abstract, even trite, phrasings argue against it, whereas Oxford’s use of Greek devices above are strikingly similar. The preponderance of evidence favors Oxford as the master with both the skill and preference for anadiplosis and the other Greek rhetorical devices. The “Shakespeare” canon examples contain those devices used with the same ease.

**The Fair/Vere Queen and Youth, Froward, and O=Nothing**

The couplet in this Shakespearean sonnet has two final Oxfordian hints. “Then fell she on her back, fair queen, and toward” couples a near homonym of Vere (fair/Vair) with the poem’s “queen.” (“Toward” had the connotation of ‘primed and ready,’ an outrageous sexual slur given her rank.) Under Elizabethan courtly circumstances, and with the complex of allusions we have just seen, one has to assume the aristocratic audience identified Elizabeth as beauty’s queen. Grammatically (if not carnally) beauty’s queen and Adonis mate side by side. He adjectivally modifies her. The “fair/Vere queen” phrase is the only one in the poem set off with commas.

Oxford’s peculiar possessive punning on the adjective “fair” recurs in Elizabethan literature. The Sonnets have a repeated phrase, “fair youth” (*Vere yEEE-OOOth*), suggesting in that work, as in “Sweet Cytherea,” a Vere-EO connection to the subject.

The last identifying word in the poem is the oddity “froward,” which appears only three or four times in the entire Shakespeare canon. It means ‘refractory, willful.’ (“Fool too froward!”). Nothing obviously Oxfordian about it. Or is there? Oxford knew Latin as thoroughly as English. “Froward” is *vernillis*. Ver- for Vere, -nil- for nothing, zero, O, and “-is” for an equals sign. Vere-O-is. This is the closing signature by the author as he takes his leave.

“Shakespeare” uses the identical equivalency of O=zero=Nothing in King Lear’s dialogue between Lear and Cordelia, who was, like Oxford’s Susan, his youngest daughter:

What can you say to draw a third

more opulent than your sisters? (Speak.)

Nothing my lord [O]  
 Nothing? [O]  
 Nothing. [O]  
 Nothing will come of nothing... [O>O]

So young and so untender  
 [yEEE—OOOng...untender = unable to offer money]

So young my lord and true.  
 [yEEE---OOOng...true=VER-US]

Let it be so. Thy truth [=VERitas]  
 then be thy dower...

Even the names Lear (Earl) and Cordelia (delia/ideal-Cor/heart) wink Oxfordian meaning. The dialogue allegorizes the poor but still honorable status of the House of Oxford in the early 1590s. Susan de Vere as Oxford's Cordelia had no legal tender. Her only wealth, "truth," was her dower. She would marry Philip Herbert, who in time became one of the wealthiest men in England, to whom (together with his brother William Herbert) the First Folio was dedicated.

*Merchant of Venice* features another version of the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford's O cipher. The word "ring" is found seventeen times in Portia's and Bassanio's Act 5.1 dialogue. In a naive reading the repetitions appear arbitrary and curious. From the perspective of naming-puns, we can see "ring" is an "O" signature at the end of the play, as *vernillis* concluded "Sweet Cytherea." "Ring" is a double pun, simultaneously alluding to the bride's vagina, *i.e.*, the wedding "ring." The term "nothing" was a like sexual reference, as shown in *Hamlet* 3.2.112-121. Antonio voices "ring" twice more, turning the litany into cathartic farce.

### "O" and "EO" as Oxfordian Initials in *Lucrece*

Meaningful uses of *Yeee-ooou/you* and O appeared covertly in the 1594 dedicatory epistle to *Lucrece*, the second published work bearing

the name "Shakespeare." Here the repetition of the "you" cognate "your(s)" cues us that it might be an embedded identity hint. Each of the four sentences addressed to the Earl of Southampton includes "your(s)." The writer makes the fourth "your" reference in the final, *fourth*, sentence, and the closing salutation also contains the word.

"Fourth" in Dutch is *deVierde*, an anagram of de Vere. The German *vier* for four is homonymous with Vere. The confluence of these verbal cues combined with their puzzling repetition indicates intentionality.

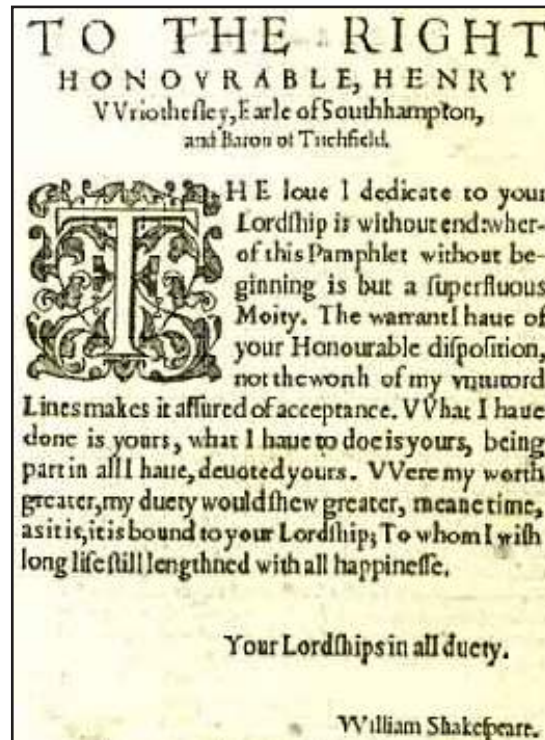
The third sentence is perhaps the most shocking dedicatory statement in the history of English literature: "What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have, devoted yours."

It is incumbent upon us either to unquestioningly accept or else decipher this extraordinary language. Italian is again the key to the puzzle. The repeated phrase, "I-have" translates into Italian as *ho*, pronounced "O," Oxford's initial. The infinitive for "to have" is *avere*, a Vere anagram (as in *As You Like It*, 5.1.42-3). These allusions to the author's identity would have been clear to the educated class:

What I-have done [*ho=O*] is *yeee-ooours*, what I-have [*ho=O*] to do is *yeee-ooours*, being part in all I-have [*ho=O*], devoted *yeee-ooours*. In a sentence, What I-have=*O* is yours=*EO*. He passes his fief heritage to Southampton. It is a vow of fealty.

To review, the "Sitting Alone" poem's logic repeatedly echoed the *yeee-ooou* structure as a poetic device to convey the EO monogram. The "Sweet Cytherea" poem's logic used "fair" [Vere] as a self-referential possessive regarding "Beauty's queen." The *Lucrece* dedicatory epistle repeatedly used "your(s)" as an EO cue to possessively identify the Earl of Southampton, just as "fair" possessively modified 'queen' in "Sweet Cytherea." The possession goes in both directions, Southampton being bequeathed the Oxford lineage and being symbolically enfolded in it. The language tricks feign to convey what the sentences cannot openly say.

Why would any author make such a declaration? The *Lucrece* dedication remains a historically consequential puzzle from which Stratfordians and even Oxfordians shy away. I hypothesize from the available linguistic evidence that it is



**The *Lucrece* dedicatory epistle (1594) described by Nichol Smith: "There is no dedication like this in Elizabethan literature." The repeated use of "I have" [Italian *Ho*, pronounced O] and "your(s)" [embedded EO] suggests to the investigator that a self-identifying pun or message lies within the language. Note that the typography also conveys an unexpected clue to the authorship of the epic poem: "Wriothesley," "What" and "Were" begin with double V's, with an explicit "Vere" in sentence four, "four" being vier in German=Vere. In sentence three, the "V" tells us who is the "I" which in turn is io in Italian, and EO in pronunciation. The six strange V's suggest a six-letter puzzle solution: de Vere. The inexplicable dedication becomes understandable as introducing the work Vere/Oxford simultaneously pledges to his own and his liege.**

(*Sweet Cytherea*, cont. from p. 23)

a communication in which elements of Oxford's distinctive punning syntax aim to extol a previously unrecognized member of the royal family. If the author was Oxford, the dedication gave his public testimony of fealty toward the highest, theretofore hidden, royalty. The Earl of Oxford otherwise



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owed no fealty to an aristocratic equal, the Earl of Southampton.

The encoded dedication perfectly fits an artistic feudal aristocrat, once close to Elizabeth, seeking through literature to broadcast his heartfelt vassalage and familial bestowals to the young Earl. No comparable dedication exists in Elizabethan letters, but one intriguing parallel bestowal, just as surprising, occurred in

1593, when Southampton was spoken of as a potential Knight of the Garter, an honor Sidney Lee described as “unprecedented outside the circle of the sovereign’s kinsmen” (Lee 1055-61). We do not know of a connection between these respective literary and political events. We do know the *Lucrece* pledge appears again, but more poignantly, in Sonnet 26 of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

Whether the person so addressed, the Earl of Southampton, lived and died as the Tudor line's uncrowned Henry IX, with Elizabeth as his dam and Oxford his sire, remains an unconcluded subject in Shakespeare historiography. The *Lucrece* dedication's repetitive use of “your(s),” and its puns pointing to the proposed author's name and title — usages consistent with prior Oxfordian punning — may constitute linguistic evidence toward the Henry IX contention.

#### The Follow-Through

The heraldic use of ‘loVe,’ representing the lineage and title of the author; the devices of “Nothing,” “O,” “ring,” “EO,” “io,” “Echo,” and “fair”/Vere as name cues; “you,” “youth,” “young,” and “your(s)” as prompts to the EO initials; the Queen being identified with Cytherea-Cynthia-Venus, the Purple, and Beauty; Adonis, Apollo, and Phoebus as the short-lived suns/sons and truth oracles; anadiplosis, diaphora, anaphora, polysyndeton, and Greek rhetorical skills generally; four as a numerical pun to *vier*; foreign homonyms to Vere; and the I-have=ho=O usage — all are author hints within Oxfordian poetry. Various of these devices recur significantly in the Shakespeare canon, e.g., *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, *Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Sonnets*, all without strain, which bespeaks the author's extensive poetic, mythological, and classical learning. Stratfordian advocates have de-emphasized the name-punning and erudite features of the Shakespeare canon, as they do not correspond in any particular to the known life of Gulielmus Shakspeare. But they are consistent with Oxford's education, poetic skills, discovered work, and lifelong literary reticence.

To my knowledge an explication of the “Sweet Cytherea” text is unprecedented, and for the simplest of reasons. There has never been any motivation to attempt one under the Stratford theory of authorship. To that hypothesis it is nothing but trouble.

In “Sweet Cytherea” we have found a short, rarely read, discredited poem that displays full command of the language which is more direct, bold, and vivid than any contemporary's. The author evokes



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rich identity puns, one after the other, utilizing several languages. His allegorical subject matter revolves around an encounter between a “Queen” of England and a favored youth. Throughout the poem the author has relaxed control of classical poetic and rhetorical technique, most especially of the modified Petrarchan sonnet form, what came to be the Shakespearean sonnet. And he caps it with his Latin signature, embedded at the close of the couplet.



The poem's cleverly planted epistemologies and name-clues have escaped the biased or prudent scholar. It would be academic suicide, a doctrinal non sequitur, to declare for an aristocratic Shakespeare.

Such an aristocrat, self-coded as O, EO, Vere, or Oxford, wrote Sonnet IV of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, a Shakespearean sonnet consistent with his rank, his love affair with Elizabeth, and his immersion in nature and learning. The poem's thematic character, sexual dynamic, lofty dramatic personae, and linguistic singularity recur in *Venus and Adonis*. We deduce from the cumulative evidence, linguistic and biographical, that Oxford wrote the sonnet and the narrative it adumbrates.

Only the weight of inert belief has kept English scholarship from understanding that Oxford's Venus/Cytherea and Adonis sonnets in *The Passionate Pilgrim* are forerunners of the later work by "William Shakespeare." Inert belief deadens motivation to inquire further.

### History of "Sweet Cytherea" in Academic Studies

Respectable scholarship tacitly expelled this poem from the Shakespeare canon after the historian and critic Albert Feuillerat asserted in the Yale Shakespeare 1927 edition of the *Minor Poems*: "Out of the twenty poems [in *The Passionate Pilgrim* and *Sonnets to Sundrie Notes of Music*], only five are indisputably by Shakespeare." Feuillerat cited Sonnet IV ["Sweet Cytherea"] and the similar VI and IX, attributing XI elsewhere, as "remarkable for their lack of imagery; they scarcely contain any simile and metaphor. The man who wrote them was singularly devoid of imagination, a thing which cannot be said of Shakespeare" (The Yale/Venus 186).

The author of "Sweet Cytherea" had no imagination, "Shakespeare" had imagination. Therefore the author was not "Shakespeare." The syllogism has two variables, asserted but not proved: 1) who was "Shakespeare" and 2) what is imagination? All the sonnets rejected by Feuillerat are pastorals dealing with the seduction of Adonis by Cytherea or Venus. That alone was a glaring beam of possible continuity with *Venus and Adonis*. Instead,

Feuillerat suggested the poems followed in the wake of *Venus and Adonis*. This would be a reversal of the usual literary evolution of a theme that runs from simple to complex, as opposed to the developed theme going simple. In other words, Feuillerat concocted an ad hoc rationalization that disposed of plausible parallelism between the *Passionate Pilgrim* sonnet and *Venus and Adonis*.

Over time, ignorance becomes tradition. Stephen Greenblatt copied almost verbatim in his 2004 book, *Will in the World*, what Feuillerat had written



**Taking Feuillerat's criticism on its face, there is good reason Sonnet IV is not styled as metaphoric (hence, the slur "devoid of imagination"). It is a poem of fourteen lines with allegorical overtones.**

**There isn't space to get fancy and tell the tale, too.**



in 1927: "Of the twenty poems only five are actually by Shakespeare" (Greenblatt 235). Feuillerat's "indisputably" became Greenblatt's "actually." *The Essential Shakespeare Handbook* (2004) amended Feuillerat's statement to "In fact, only five of its 20 poems are Shakespeare's" (Dunton-Downer 458). The "indisputable" that became "actual" concludes as "fact." As for the copying, Feuillerat was an authority all had studied, and his view had become institutional common knowledge, axiomatic truth.

Taking Feuillerat's criticism on its face, there is good reason Sonnet IV is not styled as metaphoric (hence, the slur "devoid of imagination"). It is a poem of fourteen lines with allegorical overtones. There isn't space to get fancy and tell the tale, too. Instead of logical analysis by

the editor of the *Minor Poems*, we have a summary judgment. It was psychologically repugnant, given the received biography, to imagine Shakespeare of Stratford rhapsodizing upon aristocratic mating manners, depicting the queen as seductress, and being poetically complex. It could not be the industrious Shakespeare of hoary time past.

The mythological motifs of "Sweet Cytherea" and *Venus and Adonis* imply vast learning, a headache for the prevailing doctrine. Stratford's sturdy penurious citizen had no record of highborn subtleties. His only possible artistic motivation was the matter of timing: to pump out eighteen plays and two epics between 1593 and 1604 while working as a money-lender and grain merchant at two locations, three days apart by foot (two with a change of good horses).

After Error sets up housekeeping, Truth becomes an intruder, and the occupant would rather not answer the bell ringing louder and louder.

### Denying a Rational Identification of Shakespeare

The tangle of contradictions between the received narrative about the Shakespearean "person" and the known Shakespearean works has resulted in a caricature of the author in lieu of an actual human being. There cannot be an artist of the plays and poems who lacks the soul to write them. We should expect that Shakespeare would have shown ample evidence of his passionate creative awareness that had to find expression. Every writer leaves papers, correspondence, tributes, contracts, anecdotal documentation from his peers, and advertive remembrances from family and neighbors. Here the loyal historian is on the spot to explain an absolute literary blank (Price 301-13).

Some scholars have resorted to the notion of all-triumphant genius to bridge from the Stratfordian non-artistic life to "Shakespeare." Others advocate for a kind of disconnected free Imagination. James Shapiro exalted the latter in *Contested Will* (Shapiro 275-8).

But if genius were all there were to art, there would have been no need for

(Continued on p. 26)

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“Shakespeare” to so powerfully display deep classical interest, a scholarly focus absent in Shakspeare’s life. An inspired Shakspeare might have been the equal of Robert Burns two centuries early. But that is not the stuff of “Shakespeare.” To quote a recent study on Oxford as a textbook case of genius: “The effortlessness of creativity assumed to be a function of innate ability seems to be the extreme exception and...the products of genius require refinement (Gardner, Howe). Sustained, intensified effort is most often recalled by those in the manufacture of creative achievements”(Howe 187; Simpson 3).

And imagination, like dreaming, is a universal human gift bound up with a life being lived and aesthetically transformed, rather than a secret power by which Shakspeare putatively conceived *Hamlet* on cue for staging. Spontaneous imaging does occur in all fields of creativity, but it does not explain a lengthy career that produced thirty-seven plays, three long poems, and numerous sonnets and lyrics.

The crudity, one could say dishonesty, of ginning up a theory of creativity to fit one person’s otherwise unartistic existence nevertheless cannot remake surrounding historical fact to support it. For example, Thomas Nashe referred to “whole Hamlets,

I should say handfuls, of tragicall speeches” in 1589, suggesting that a version of *Hamlet* predated Shakspeare’s first appearance in London. We are more stunned by the non sequitur breeziness of the Stratfordian illogic than convinced of its accuracy as biography.

Western literary criticism has been quite able to place every other artist’s works in intimate connection and continuity with his or her life, whether Jonson, Chapman, Fletcher, Cervantes, Austen, Fielding, Eliot, Stendhal, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Clemens, Hardy, Galsworthy, Ibsen, Dreiser, Stein, Joyce, Beckett, Hemingway, or Faulkner. Must we avoid the life of one author only, he who is their acknowledged master of lyric grace and psychological insight?

Ignoring the soul and the history behind the moniker “Shakespeare” has become *post facto* policy to smooth the *status quo*. So doing avoids rational process routinely applied elsewhere in life and literature. The hypocrisy may well be toxic. In 1930 Sigmund Freud concluded, “It is undeniably painful for all of us that even now we do not know who was the author of the Comedies, Tragedies, and Sonnets of Shakespeare...” (Freud 211). We have textual confirmation of “Shakespeare” as Oxford now. It is culturally unjust, after creating his nation’s foundation myth,

(Continued on p. 27)

that as A.B. Grosart wrote in 1872, "an unlifted shadow somehow lies across his memory."

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(News, cont. from p. 6)

### Joseph Sobran (1946-2010)

Joseph Sobran, author of the popular pro-Oxford book *Alias Shakespeare: Solving the Greatest Literary Mystery of All Time* (first published in 1997 by The Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster), died on September 30, 2010, at the age of 64.

Born Michael Joseph Sobran, he graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 1969, and began graduate studies in Shakespeare (at the time, he “never for a moment doubted the authorship of ‘the Stratford man,’” as he put it in the introduction of his book). In 1972 he publicly supported Eastern Michigan’s decision to invite William Buckley, publisher of the conservative magazine *The National Review*, to speak on campus, a decision which had been opposed by much of the faculty; Sobran’s actions came to Buckley’s attention, and Buckley promptly hired him. Sobran worked for *NR* for the next twenty-one years, becoming a senior editor. He later was a syndicated columnist, and from 1994 to 2007 published his own newsletter, *Sobran’s: The Real News of the Week*.

Sobran’s interest in the authorship question began in the mid-1980s, when he was assigned to review Charlton Ogburn Jr.’s *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* for *The National Review*. Sobran would later tell the story of how he was ready to

trash Ogburn, but by the time he finished reading the book he realized that it was he who would have to rearrange his thinking. Sobran was instrumental in persuading his boss to book Ogburn as a guest on Buckley’s syndicated TV show, *Firing Line*, which helped to widely publicize and legitimize the authorship issue; this in turn may have helped influence the decision to hold the Moot Court Debate before three U.S. Supreme Court Justices in Washington DC three years later.

Sobran attended three annual conferences of the Shakespeare Oxford Society in the late 1990s. At the 1997 conference in Seattle he debated Prof. Alan Nelson, author of *Monstrous Adversary*, a biography of Oxford which attempted to portray him as one who couldn’t possibly have been the real Shakespeare. There Sobran delivered a memorable rejoinder to Nelson, who had been using the adverb “absolutely” to emphasize nearly every single point he made denigrating Oxford and/or promoting the Stratford man. Sobran finally responded, “Alan, I wish I could be as ‘absolutely’ certain about anything having to do with the authorship question as you are ‘absolutely’ certain about everything.” Sobran made a similar point in the introduction to *Alias Shakespeare*: “The most dispiriting trait of the professional scholars is not their consensus about Shakespeare’s identity, but their refusal to admit that there can be any room for doubt” (emphasis in original).

No stranger to controversy, Sobran was fired by Buckley in 1993, chiefly because of his harsh criticism of American foreign policy toward Israel. After his dismissal, his criticism of Israel continued unabated.

Twice divorced, Sobran is survived by four children, ten grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

[Editor’s note: While researching Joe Sobran’s life online, I came across a reminiscence of him by Paul Greenberg on the right-wing web site [patriotpost.us](http://patriotpost.us). A journalist himself, Greenberg had at one point carried Sobran’s syndicated column, but dropped it as Sobran’s views became increasingly extreme. The following paragraph is a terrific example of the ad hominem attack – that if a person holds unpopular, extreme (or even incorrect) views on one subject, then all of his views must be equally absurd:

“Someone once noted that cranks can be identified by their weakness for certain semi-intellectual fads – to wit, vegetarianism, monetary conspiracy theories, anti-Semitism, and the belief that someone other than William Shakespeare wrote the works of William Shakespeare. So it came as no surprise to learn from Joe Sobran’s obituary that, sure enough, he’d written a book attributing Shakespeare’s plays to someone else, specifically, Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford and a popular nominee in that bulging category.”]



### Inside this issue:

*Asbland Conference 2010.....1*

*William Ray on “Sweet Cytherea”...1*

*Ted Story Laughing with Ben Jonson...1*

*Earl Showerman reprinted by Gale Publishing....4*

*In memoriam: Stone, Wexler, Brazil, Sobran.....5*

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