



# Shakespeare Matters

*“The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship”*

## Shakespeare: Treason or Transformation?

by Alan Stott

*During the times of Universal Deceit, telling the Truth becomes a Revolutionary Act* — George Orwell



What is called “the Shakespeare authorship question” is not a simple matter of substituting names; it opens up far-reaching issues. Chief among them is the imaginative vision of the artist and its accompanying search for identity. I focus on that theme here – in short, the witness of poets themselves. Each generation of readers of Shakespeare finds new and often unexpected connotations, allusions and resonances. In following up questions, we are repaid by most significant gains. With the Bard we are challenged to adjust or even abandon what we took for certainties concerning the author.

Recent discoveries suggest that to deny the authorship question is to be living in a previous century. The relationship between historical reality (the life) and artistic creation (the works) now seems uniquely close, accompanied by tension yet ultimately inspiring. In this article, I assume all the cited authorities are bona fide researchers, and further, that a dispassionate approach is an essential principle in the pursuit of truth. With that in mind, let us turn to the work of Austrian-born philosopher and spiritual researcher Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), whose concrete insights invariably focus on actual human beings. Steiner occupies a class of his own; I would not be surprised if he had anticipated our situation and provided sustenance for students a hundred years on, showing that he was aware of a profound issue. I believe I have located the moment when such encouragement is provided. My discovery came by taking seriously Steiner’s expressed wish that readers weigh what he says in the light of all the available phenomena and evidence with an unbiased sense for truth. In a previous article,<sup>1</sup> I joined those who acknowledge the authorship question. Here, standing on the shoulders of giants, I suggest the most important recent discoveries, along with some of the most perceptive remarks and discoveries of poets and literary critics known to me (poets do not cease to be poets when writing criticism), suggest a clear context to begin evaluating Steiner’s revelations, though I make no claim to understand them all.

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Roland Emmerich (left) enjoys talking with Fellowship member Alan Green (right) at the Portland Concordia University debut of *Anonymous*.

## Emmerich Honored, *Anonymous* Screened at SASC

by Howard Schumann



Acclaimed film director Roland Emmerich was honored at Concordia University’s 15th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, which was held in Portland, Oregon, from September 6 through 9. Emmerich introduced a private screening of his new film, *Anonymous*, which depicts Edward de Vere, the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford as the real author of the works attributed to William Shakespeare. It further suggests — via the perhaps intentionally problematical source of Robert Cecil in the film’s denouement — that de Vere was the illegitimate son of the Queen and, in 1573, the father of a son with Elizabeth, Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton.

Though there is disagreement on the merits of the “Prince Tudor” theories within the Oxfordian movement, the film seemed to delight most of those in attendance, though some expressed reservations. Emmerich made himself available to Conference participants at a reception in his honor, and participated in a panel with Conference Chairman Professor Daniel Wright, PhD, Professor Joel Davis and author Hank Whittemore to discuss the film.

Emmerich stated that it took him three or four years to

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## From the President



Having just returned from another outstanding joint authorship conference in Washington DC, where most of us were privileged to have a tour of the Folger Shakespeare Library and a preview screening of *Anonymous*, I can assure our members that new levels of scholarly discourse are in play, and that our people do not lack for enthusiasm, new ideas, or sincere collegiality. A full report on the conference will be in the next *Shakespeare Matters*. For those members unable to attend, the program syllabus is now posted on-line at [www.shakespearefellowship.org/conference2011/schedule.pdf](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/conference2011/schedule.pdf).

During the conference special achievement and appreciation awards were bestowed on *Brief Chronicles* General Editor Roger Stritmatter and on Richard Desper, who is retiring from his position as assistant treasurer and membership chair. With our co-sponsor, the Shakespeare Oxford Society, plans are underway to return to Carmel, CA for next fall's conference. Carmel is the home of Pacific Repertory Theatre, which will produce *Julius Caesar* in their newly remodeled theater in 2012. We will post the conference dates and accommodation information as soon as they are confirmed by our joint committee.

Over the past five months the trustees of the Shakespeare Fellowship have worked collaboratively to develop a position statement in response to the release of Roland Emmerich's film, *Anonymous*. In

July, an initial draft was briefly posted on our website and distributed to Oxfordian groups. Comments from a number of colleagues led to revisions and amendments, and further refinements were made after the film was previewed during the Con-



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cordia Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference in Portland. The final draft of the board's statement on *Anonymous* was presented to the Shakespeare Fellowship annual meeting in Washington, and has also been posted on our website and is

available in this issue of *Shakespeare Matters* (see p. 6). As it makes clear, the board understands Roland Emmerich's film to be a fictional representation of an authorship narrative, one that most Oxfordians do not find necessary to the proposition that Edward de Vere was Shakespeare, nor to our understanding of Oxford's desire to remain anonymous. While *Anonymous* is a brilliant and provocative film, Oxford's claim to be the genius behind Shakespeare is based on many other "canonical" authorship works that do not explore the politics of succession.

*Brief Chronicles III* will be released soon and promises to be "heavy with research papers," according to one editor, with essays on *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Willobvie His Avis*, Richard Whalen's "Commedia dell'arte in *Othello*," and Bonner Miller Cutting's incisive critique of the Thomas Seymour PT theory, "She Will Not Be a Mother," which she presented at our recent conference. Finally, John Shahan and the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition are actively engaging the community of authorship scholars to confront and rebut the claims of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust over the inaccuracies in their recent

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### Shakespeare Matters

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The Shakespeare Fellowship promotes public awareness 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 scholarly 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 (Fed ID 04-3578550).

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*Shakespeare Matters* welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Fellowship as a literary and educational organization.

From the Editors

## Anonymous Dramatizes the Authorship Question

by Alex McNeil

**B**y the time this issue of *Shakespeare Matters* reaches its readers, Roland Emmerich's long-awaited film, *Anonymous*, will have been released worldwide (October 28 was the announced release date). Oxfordians all expect that the movie will do more to publicize the case for Edward de Vere than anything else has since John Thomas Looney first made the case for him in 1920.

The film had several "premieres" and sneak previews prior its official release date. The North American premiere took place at the Toronto Film Festival in late August, and was well received. At the event, several persons from the film took part in a panel discussion: director Roland Emmerich, screenwriter John Orloff, and actors Rhys Ifans (de Vere), Jamie Campbell Bower (young de Vere), Joely Richardson (young Queen Elizabeth) and Xavier Samuel (Southampton). Emmerich stated that the "angle of political intrigue" attracted him to the project. "They had censorship. . . . These writers did an amazing job of circumventing the censorship, and bringing to the people what they [the writers] thought." Rhys Ifans said that he enjoyed playing "a man who was the creator of so many universes," and that Ifans' "hook" in creating his character was "the isolation and the loneliness that he felt in his anonymity." Joely Richardson (whose mother, Vanessa Redgrave, plays the aging Queen Elizabeth) told the crowd that her mother "absolutely loves this film" and that "we both felt completely honored to play Elizabeth;" turning to Emmerich, Richardson added, "I'm blown away by your film, Roland."

The U.S. premiere was a week later, at this year's Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference at Concordia University in Portland, OR. Director Emmerich was in attendance, and was presented with an award by Conference Director Daniel Wright (see article on page 1 of this issue).

On September 30 *Anonymous* was screened at the New Yorker Festival. Mark Anderson, author of *Shakespeare by Another Name*, was there and reported that "the audience was generally very receptive . . . and had a great time." Immediately after the film a debate took place



**Director Emmerich was presented with the Crystal Quill award by the Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles. Accepting the award, Emmerich noted that *Anonymous* is "a special movie dear to my heart," and that Edward de Vere endured "enough pain to write those words." Emmerich also commended the Shakespeare Center for its courage in recognizing him: "It's a very gutsy thing to do. You will learn in the next few weeks. It will not go over that well." Shakespeare Center founder and director Ben Donenberg replied that he was already "getting hate mail."**



between director Emmerich and Columbia professor James Shapiro, author of *Contested Will*. Shapiro criticized the film as claiming to be historical truth when it is "almost entirely" fictionalized. Emmerich defended the right of a filmmaker to use "dramatic license in telling truths in a large-scale mainstream movie." Shapiro

then commented that, to him, the film seemed to involve on one side a "lot of blond haired guys who cared about their bloodlines {wanting} to somehow restore something from the past that was great." According to Anderson, that remark, with its not-so-subtle suggestion of anti-Semitism aimed at a German director, alienated many in the audience. During a post-debate Q & A, Anderson expressed his wish "for a more open and honest debate," to which Shapiro retorted, "There is no debate here. It's like the evolution versus creationism argument. When you have any actual evidence, then there will be a debate." Anderson replied that there is abundant circumstantial evidence; Shapiro responded that "Circumstantial evidence does not count. This is not a law case. This is Shakespeare."

A few days later a special screening of the film was held at the Sony Pictures lot in Culver City, CA. There, director Emmerich was presented with the Crystal Quill award by the Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles. Accepting the award, Emmerich noted that *Anonymous* is "a special movie dear to my heart," and that Edward de Vere endured "enough pain to write those words." Emmerich also commended the Shakespeare Center for its courage in recognizing him: "It's a very gutsy thing to do. You will learn in the next few weeks. It will not go over that well." Shakespeare Center founder and director Ben Donenberg replied that he was already "getting hate mail. 'How dare we take this on?' This film . . . will only propel the debate."

The last major sneak preview was on October 13, at a cinema in Washington, DC, which was arranged for this year's annual Shakespeare Oxford Society/Shakespeare Fellowship Joint Conference. A number of those in attendance were seeing it a second (or even third) time, and they all stated that they enjoyed the film even more with a repeated viewing. At a post-screening

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

## We're Moving!

You may have noticed a new address sticker on the envelope for this issue. We have acquired a new postal address: **PO Box 66083, Auburndale MA 02466**. Please make a note of it. Dick Desper, who currently serves as membership director, has announced that he'd like to hand that job over to someone else, and Alex McNeil has agreed to take over. The old mailbox (PO Box 421, Hudson MA 01749) will continue to receive mail for the next few months, but the Auburndale address is operational. The Shakespeare Fellowship extends a hearty thanks to Dick for all the work he has done in maintaining our membership files, processing dues payments, and the many other mundane but thankless tasks that go into keeping an organization going. We could never have stayed in business without him.

## In Memoriam, Tom Hunter (1942-2011)



With great sadness we report the passing of Oxfordian friend and colleague R. Thomas (Tom) Hunter. Tom died on his 69<sup>th</sup> birthday, October 3, two days after suffering a heart attack at his cottage in Michigan. Tom had strong ties to his home state. He received his AB from the University of Michigan, and an MA and PhD from Wayne State University in Detroit. A

resident of Bloomfield Hills, he had recently retired as Agency Supervisor Officer of the Detroit Financial Group.

Becoming interested in the Shakespeare authorship question some years ago, Tom became one of the very first members of a local Oxfordian group which became known as the Oberon Shakespeare Study Group; he served as its chair for several years. He was also a member of another organization, which called itself the Grumpies – a group (mostly men) who frequently wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper. Tom was a keen researcher and a skilled writer. He made presentations at numerous SOS/SF Joint Conferences, and contributed articles to these pages and to the Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter. Tom is survived by his wife, Rosey, their daughter, Lisa Marie, and several brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews.

## Showerman BC Article Reprinted by Gale

Gale Publications *Shakespeare Criticism 141* is in print, with Earl Showerman's 2009 *Brief Chronicles* article, "Shakespeare's Many Much Ado's: Alcestis, Hercules, and Love's Labour's Wonne." This year's *SC* features articles on *Coriolanus*, *Much Ado*, *Richard III* and *Troilus and Cressida*. Showerman's *BC* article on *Much Ado* begins at page 87. The other contributors to the *Much Ado* section (p 62-128) include Claire McEachern, "Why Do Cuckolds Have Horns?" (*Huntington Library Quarterly*), who edited the excellent Arden edition of *Much Ado* that Showerman used, plus several other articles. Showerman notes, "It's hard to believe they actually included the final paragraphs regarding the direct sources and Oxford's claim to this play, but they did." Showerman's article is the first one from *Brief Chronicles* to have been selected by a mainstream journal for republication, although at least two other essays, one by Heward Wilkinson (2010) and the other by Michael Wainright (forthcoming in 2011), have been or will be shortly republished in books.

## Shakespeare Makes you Smarter?

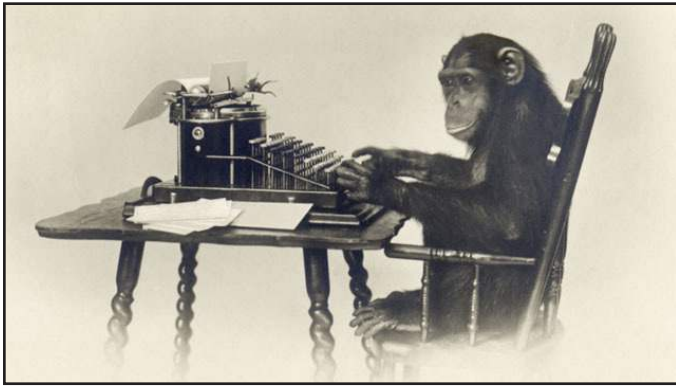


### Your Brain on Sonnet 76: Every Word doth almost tell *whose* name?

Don't look now, but Shakespeare makes you smarter. At least, that's what the neuroscientists are saying.

An August 23 article from the online news provider BigThink reports on research by Professor Philip Davis from the University of Liverpool's School of English, conducted with assistance from colleagues in neuroscience, showing that Shakespeare's "creative mistakes...shift mental pathways and open possibilities" for what the brain can do.

In the words of BigThink's Daniel Honan, this means the ways Shakespeare's "deliberate syntactic errors" – like changing the part of speech of a word – can serve to excite, rather than confuse, readers.



**Nymsky ponders how to more fully delineate the ambitious Macbeth, a character he could never quite understand....to hyphenate, or not to hyphenate, that is the question...**

### Shapiro Plays Nazi Card – Again

As reported on page 3 of this issue, Roland Emmerich on Sept. 30 debated James Shapiro at the Director's Guild of America on 57th Street in Manhattan. Mark Anderson was present, and his blog posting on the event represents some excellent analysis of the "state of the debate."

Amazingly, yes, Shapiro played the Nazi card at the Director's Guild, saying that "The film seems to [involve] on one side a lot of blond-haired guys who cared about their bloodlines who want to somehow restore something from the past that was great."

As Mark reports: "Yes, you read that correctly. Speaking to a successful and acclaimed German director, James Shapiro went THERE. It was a dog-whistle moment – effectively accusing the German filmmaking team of conveying reactionary or Nazi-like messages – that was truly shameful to witness."

### Monkeys on Typewriters: "Close to Reproducing Shakespeare"?

A computer programmer testing the "Infinite Monkey Theorem"—that, with enough time, a monkey randomly mashing a typewriter would eventually type the complete works of Shakespeare—says his virtual monkeys will soon complete the works, way ahead of their infinity deadline!

As "a fun side project," Jesse Anderson created millions of small computer programs that generate "random sequences of nine characters." As each sequence is created, it is compared to Shakespeare's oeuvre; if it matches anywhere, it gets checked off a list. The monkeys have been typing for 35 days, and most recently completed "A Lover's Complaint."

But Anderson's monkeys aren't typing Shakespeare in order, so monkey-literature-ologists aren't sure if it should "count." Also, the one time someone actually hired real monkeys to do the mashing, the sequences weren't even "random," the *Daily Telegraph* reports:

In 2003 the Arts Council for England paid £2,000 for a real-life test of the theorem involving six Sulawesi crested macaques, but the trial was abandoned after a month.

The monkeys produced five pages of text, mainly composed of

the letter S, but failed to type anything close to a word of English, broke the computer, and used the keyboard as a lavatory.

### Ben August to Join Fellowship Board

Ben August, the Houston area businessman who has established the Edward de Vere – Shakespeare group on Facebook and who commissioned the beautiful bust of Oxford as Shakespeare by Paula Slater, has agreed to join the Shakespeare Fellowship board. August's Facebook project, which has attracted more than 6,400 "likes," may be found at [www.facebook.com/TrueShakespeare](http://www.facebook.com/TrueShakespeare). The page has a vigorous discussion amounting to dozens if not hundreds of brief "postlets" a day.

"The goal for my page is to promote the true identity of the great author, Shakespeare," says August. "Most people still don't know that Shakespeare was the pen name of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. I am an associate producer of a movie on this subject coming out in 2011. I've also opened a beautiful



**Ben August with Paula Slater's Bronze Bust of Edward de Vere.**

gallery where you can find fine art and fun stuff to celebrate the man behind Shakespeare." Ben's impressive gallery, which uses state-of-the-art java and flash applications, is located at <http://www.verilyshakespeare.com/>.

August lives in Spring, Texas, where he has an ownership

stake in and runs four businesses. He's demonstrated a knack for discovering hidden potential in various industries and turning that into a measure of business success. He successfully started, ran, and sold several businesses before moving from California to Texas.

Ben discovered the authorship question in 1995 through Michael Hart's book, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* and was astonished. He'd had an abiding fondness for Shakespeare, especially *Hamlet* and the *Sonnets*, but was new to the authorship issue. After reading Mark Anderson's *Shakespeare by Another Name*, he recognized that it was time to remove the traditional Shakespeare bust from his library shelf. Later he realized he wanted a de Vere bust and, not finding one, he resolved to have one sculpted. This, of course, led to his commissioning of the magnificent bust of Edward de Vere sculpted by Paula Slater.

Ben is now a committed promoter of de Vere as the true "Shakespeare." He has placed one of the original bronze busts at Castle Hedingham, the birthplace of Edward de Vere. Asked about his intentions as a new trustee, Ben simply said: "During my time on the board I intend to introduce thousands of people to the authorship question."

*(Continued on p. 6)*

(News, cont. from p. 5)



Anderson, armed to take on the “stubborn bear, authority.”

### **Anonymous Generates Publicity Tsunami**

Authorship debates and discussion are breaking out all over the worldwide web as the October 28 *Anonymous* release date approaches. The inundation has been so widespread that it is of course impossible to do more than offer a few highlights here. Major articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Sfgate.com*. The BBC's Andrew Marr, reportedly among the most respected commentators in England, interviewed a breathtakingly graceful and intelligent Vanessa Redgrave. *The Toronto Sun* interviewed Roland Emmerich, and the *Orlando Sentinel* John Rhys Ifans, who plays de Vere in the production. The *UK Telegraph* hosted a debate between Stanley Wells and Charles Beauclerk.

The story of the *New York Times* perhaps the supplies the best moral for the current round of coverage. For a period of time starting in the late 1990s, *The New York Times* enjoyed the prestige of supplying some intellectual leadership due to the influence of William Nieder Korn, since retired and currently rumored to be writing a book on the authorship question, after writing a series of impressive authorship related reviews for the *Brooklyn Rail*, a popular and influential arts and culture paper. Alas, with the loss of Nieder Korn, the *Times* has sunk to a new low in its coverage, allowing James Shapiro essentially unanswered editorial page space to spew the usual venom (with no comments allowed), and following this up with an

astounding October 21 screed (published online October 23) by someone named Stephen Marche, which facetiously inquired “Wouldn’t It Be Cool if Shakespeare Wasn’t Shakespeare?” Marche went on from this promising opening to deliver a diatribe assuring readers that

The good news is that *Anonymous* makes an extraordinarily poor case for the Oxfordian theory. I could nitpick the film all day. (In fact, I did on the day I saw it.)...You don’t have to be a truther or a birther to enjoy a conspiracy theory. We all, at one point or another, indulge fantasies that make the world seem more dangerous, more glamorous and, simultaneously, much



**We all, at one point or another, indulge fantasies that make the world seem more dangerous, more glamorous and, simultaneously, much more simple than it actually is. But then most of us grow up. Or put down the bong. Or read a book by somebody who is familiar with both proper historical methodology and the facts....**



more simple than it actually is. But then most of us grow up. Or put down the bong. Or read a book by somebody who is familiar with both proper historical methodology and the facts.... It is impossible that Edward de Vere wrote Shakespeare. Notice that I am not saying improbable; it is impossible. Better scholars than I will ever be have articulated the scale of the idiocy.

The *New York Times* may have something to learn about social media and the limits of propaganda in the internet era. Paul Feig, creator of one of the best TV shows of the 1990s, *Freaks and Geeks*, and

director of the hit comedy *Bridesmaids* last year, has 1.2 million twitter followers. In an Oct. 21 tweet, Feig used Twittered over the top of Marche’s censorious ignorance: “I Just saw the most amazing film, *Anonymous*. Congrats to writer John Orloff and director Roland Emmerich. Amazing cast. It’s seriously great.”

The Fellowship’s own Mark Anderson has been very busy, among other things being a featured interviewer for an October 21 story on NPR’s *Studio 360*, interviewing *Anonymous* screenwriter John Orloff, Sir Derek Jacobi, and Berkeley’s Dr. Alan Nelson, who (as is his wont) gets in more than a few words “edgewise.”

[The following statement has been issued by the Board of Trustees]

**The Shakespeare Fellowship commends Roland Emmerich for directing the film, *Anonymous*, but stresses that this production’s Tudor succession narrative is not essential to the theory that the Earl of Oxford was the writer Shakespeare.**

The Shakespeare Fellowship resoundingly supports the proposition that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the true genius behind the works of William Shakespeare, and congratulates Roland Emmerich on his movie, *Anonymous*, the first major feature film to deal with this fascinating subject. We hope the film will encourage people to explore the authorship question and decide for themselves whether William Shaksper of Stratford-upon-Avon was the true author of the great plays and poems traditionally attributed to him.

The Shakespeare Fellowship notes that Mr. Emmerich characterizes his film as a work of fiction. He makes no claim that all of the events depicted in the film are true. He is fully aware that elements of his story, that Oxford may have been the son of Queen Elizabeth, or that Oxford and Elizabeth had a child who was raised as the 3rd Earl of Southampton, are not endorsed by many of those who hold that the Earl of Oxford was Shakespeare. Most Oxfordians do not believe that these hypotheses are necessary to the proposition that Oxford wrote Shakespeare’s works or to gain an

(Continued on page. 31)

(*Treason, cont. from p. 1*)

After his earlier work at the Goethe Archives in Weimar, Rudolf Steiner led a literary life in Berlin. He edited and wrote the theatrical reviews for a national weekly, the *Magazin für Literatur*, equivalent of the *London Saturday Review*. Later he established his working center in Dornach, Switzerland. The Goetheanum was billed as a “House of the Word”; here, amongst other works, Goethe’s *Faust* and Steiner’s own dramas are still regularly performed. Admittedly, Steiner’s remarks appear to reflect the conventional view that William of Stratford-on-Avon is the author.



**Recent discoveries suggest that to deny the authorship question is to be living in a previous century. The relationship between historical reality (the life) and artistic creation (the works) now seems uniquely close, accompanied by tension yet ultimately inspiring.**



The arguments that Francis Bacon – the chief alternative candidate in Steiner’s day – was the Bard, Steiner says, “are utterly superficial.”<sup>2</sup> Steiner reveals a common inspiration linking both Bacon and Shakespeare, also suggested by Frances Yates.<sup>3</sup> Baconians, then, see something but could be jumping to premature conclusions. Further to the debate, as a candidate for authorship J. Thomas Looney published a constellation of powerful arguments pointing to Edward de Vere, the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, an argument which has been recently updated by Charles Beauclerk.<sup>4</sup> If Steiner knew directly of Looney’s work, I am not aware of it. John Michell initially discusses the candidates for authorship;<sup>5</sup> the latest Oxfordian scholarship is impressive and to me convincing.

Everyone knows the Shakespearean

records are uniquely sparse for the time. If we assume Steiner’s spiritual vision meets the facts of the case, then (also assuming the hand that held the pen had



**Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925): literary critic, mystic, cultural philosopher, and founder of Anthroposophy movement.**

to be concealed) a spiritual reporter like Steiner may have had good reasons to go along with repeating the accepted fiction. He would be perfectly aware that historical and literary evidence would come to light at the right time. In such circumstances, we might expect an appeal to concrete imaginative perception will be made, perhaps with a certain verbal irony. No one accuses Chaucer of conveying untruths about his *Canterbury Pilgrims*; on the contrary, we appreciate how through irony he portrays their real characters. Irony is recognized as a standard means to point to the truth, counteracting a fixed literacy and even pomposity (in music, too, Haydn and Beethoven employed overt and subtle irony long before modern composers made it standard practice). We find that the Bard himself made irony and satire his lifestyle. Beauclerk draws attention to the three “interlocking plots in any given Shakespeare play”: the fictional plot, the topical satire, and the “soul story” of the author’s unconscious or “mythic existence” (162). In this comprehensive context, I select for

closer scrutiny one passage from a lecture Steiner delivered 100 years ago. My thesis of 2007 now gains a new emphasis.

The authorship question itself is admittedly challenging and some aspects of it are not for the squeamish. A beginner might expect that no bona fide scholar would dismiss out of hand, for example, the researches of Oxfordian scholars, say, about dating the plays. Indeed, from data published in the Pelican Revised Text (1969), the “margin of error” of the consensus dates effectively admits that all but the (usually construed) last two plays – *Henry VIII* and *The Tempest* – may well have been composed before 1604. The crucial case, dating the composition of *The Tempest*, is now shown to be on or before 1603.<sup>6</sup> Interesting questions include: How is it that early versions of some plays were performed before William came to London? When were those plays written that were first performed after Oxford’s death in 1604? What about the sudden flux of eighteen plays appearing for the first time in the First Folio, seven years after William’s death in 1616?

Unfortunately, the subject is not pursued everywhere in a disinterested spirit; we must even be aware of disinformation. On the other hand, bona fide work cannot be ignored indefinitely. The times also encourage a sharing of informed vision, not simply information. Indeed, identifying the author is now a vital issue. It would seem that Shakespearean criticism, with the authorship questions, is one of the key points in literature where “New Criticism” such as deconstruction must give way to the new historicism.

### Recent Publications

The issue is coming to a head. A full-length biography of Edward de Vere by Mark Anderson (2005)<sup>7</sup> points out the plentiful connections to the Shakespearean canon. Supported by the necessary scholarship, he provides a flesh and blood candidate to fill the yawning gap in our knowledge of the Bard. He avoids suppositions, ciphers and esoterics; his evidence is historical, cumulative and considerably furthers Looney’s claims. We follow the life, studies, marital problems, travels,

(Continued on p. 8)

(*Treason, cont. from p. 7*)

literary and theatrical career, frustrations and crises – all this raw material in relation to the canon. A list of documented solid facts concerning the life of the Stratford candidate, as distinct from suppositions, would be exhausted in a few pages.<sup>8</sup>

What about the apparently pirated, and quickly suppressed, *Shake-Speares Sonnets* (1609) “by our ever-living poet” – the adjective, incidentally, never used of a living person – with their enigmatic biographical references? As a start, the intricate formal devices of the Sonnet sequence – a remarkable tour de force, second only to Spenser in complexity – have been convincingly



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revealed by the exemplary scholarship of Alastair Fowler.<sup>9</sup> The Sonnets, he shows, are numbered correctly, and clues to the pyramid form are presented by the positioning of the few intentionally irregular sonnets. More recently, Hank Whittemore,<sup>10</sup> incorporating the three year-parts and other temporal references, reveals a hidden personal story of national, indeed international interest that runs parallel to the overt literary meaning. Far from indulging the “biographical fallacy” in our reading, Whittemore shows that the Sonnets were intended to transmute a tortuous life story into a work of art. That story takes place in real time, some Sonnets marking a day-by-day diary. The author created a permanent “monument” to the “fair youth.” In other words, the

Sonnet sequence communicates more to us when we recognize the true author. If this were not so, then the entire work of post-modernists such as John Barth would be reduced in meaning. In the face of the cumulative weight of recent research there is no option but to reconsider Shakespeare, man and author.

“Shake-Speare”’s initial concern in the first 17 Sonnets is that of a father and potential grandfather, as C.S. Lewis surmised: “What man in the whole world, except a father or a potential father-in-law, cares whether any other man gets married?”<sup>11</sup> The “Dark Lady” of the Sonnets, Whittemore now shows, is Queen Elizabeth, and the “fair youth” is her and de Vere’s 17-year-old son (b. late May 1574) – brought up as Henry Wriothesley (see Beauclerk 105-107). He is the love-child “Cupid” in Sonnets 153 and 154 that refer to a royal visit to the city of Bath, which de Vere joined in August 1574:

But found no cure; the bath for my help lies  
Where Cupid got new fire – my mistress’ eyes.

As 3rd Earl of Southampton, Wriothesley is the dedicatee of “Shakespeare’s” first and second of relatively few publications in his lifetime, the two poems *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Rape of Lucrece* (1594). The author, Whittemore suggests, in effect took a treasonous step by associating the name “William Shakespeare” with the cause of those demanding that Queen Elizabeth name her successor. If acknowledged, Henry would have become Henry IX of England. Earlier, Wriothesley had chosen to pay a punitive fine (£5,000, c. \$1.3 million in today’s money) for refusing the plan of William Cecil (Elizabeth’s chief minister) that he marry his eldest granddaughter (also Wriothesley’s half-sister), de Vere’s daughter Elizabeth by Anne Cecil, and thus bring the Cecil family into royalty. The tension came to a head with the abortive “Essex Rebellion” of Feb. 7, 1601, that challenged the regime, in particular Robert Cecil, who held the power behind the throne. When Essex was beheaded, Elizabeth basically lost her wits. Southampton was the only leader to survive. The agreement to save his life, Whittemore suggests, was made not only on the condition that the unacknowledged prince give up all claims to the throne, but also by guaranteeing the complete silence of his father, the hidden author known to posterity as “Shakespeare.” The mask became stuck. Among the first things King James I did as the new sovereign was to release Wriothesley from imprisonment on April 10, 1603. He became Captain of the Isle of Wight three months later.

Roger Stritmatter,<sup>12</sup> moreover, has already provided evidence that Edward de Vere was a hidden writer in a scrupulously researched PhD thesis on the markings of the latter’s Geneva Bible. Some of the underscored verses refer to secret authorship – the lifestyle of irony of God’s fools and prophets: “the prophet is a foole; the spiritual man is mad” (Hosea 9:7). Matthew, chapter 6:4 advises giving “almes... in secret, & thy Father that seeth in secret, he wil rewarde thee openly.” Recall Hamlet’s feigned “madness,” Lear’s Fool who speaks the truth, Edgar as “poor Tom,” not to mention such themes as disguise, mistaken identity, twins and the sequence of bastard characters. A significant number of



underscored verses in this Bible relate to the canon itself and its relationship to the inner life of Edward de Vere.

We plunge into even more controversial areas with *Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom* (2010). Charles Beauclerk, concentrating on the Bard's relationship to Elizabeth, explores further both the mythology and the scandalizing circumstances that led to the increasingly urgent question of the succession. It is possible that Elizabeth – the “Virgin Queen” of accepted myth, married to her subjects – was the mother of several children. There were strange illnesses and confinements; in a police state you keep quiet about certain secrets. But, there again, people also wanted to believe the national myth. There is the portrait, too, by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (c. 1594) in Hampton Court, of a pregnant lady, originally identified as Queen Elizabeth; one could add that the van der Werff portrait in Dublin, Ireland, depicts Elizabeth with three children.<sup>13</sup> After a childhood with foster parents, it is claimed these children turn up with the “royal wards” living in Cecil House on the Strand, near the River Thames – William Cecil, made Lord Burghley in 1571, was to become de Vere's father-in-law. De Vere was the first, Wriothesley the last royal ward. There they received probably the best education in the land, with access to remarkable libraries.

Not all Oxfordians hold with the suggestion Beauclerk follows up, that royal incest – practiced in earlier civilizations – was revived by the succession-obsessed and sex-obsessed Henry VIII, the father of Elizabeth. She herself may have inherited his appetites. The brilliant Princess translated (1544) Queen Margaret of Navarre's *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*,<sup>14</sup> a religious text with ambiguous innuendos:

O my sauioure, through faith I am planted, and ioyned with the.  
O what vnion is thys syth (through faith) I am sure of the,  
and now I maye call the: sonne, father, spowse, and brother,  
Father, brother, sonne, husband....

What prompted the interest of the precocious 11-year-old Princess Elizabeth? In our democratic age we favor genetic common sense, and – relatively recently – we respect the claims of romantic love. But for a powerful hereditary aristocracy, a “good family name” and arranged marriages were the norm. “Keeping it in the family” with illicit unions of mythical and historical precedent even achieved a sacred nimbus. Royal blood was sacred; it was to be kept “pure.” Tracing Elizabeth's inner torment with historical and sympathetic psychological insight, Beauclerk offers reasons why she persisted in not naming a successor and thus snuffed out the Tudor dynasty. “Her resolution not to marry and not to share her throne was part of this unyielding determination to create an image for herself that transcended her origins” (35). In the Shakespeare canon, no one can deny that the incest theme, overt in *Pericles*, is not far beneath the text in *Hamlet*, *Lear* and other plays.<sup>15</sup> The protagonists, everyone agrees, are very troubled characters indeed.

James Joyce saw that the connections between text and author are indissoluble. In his epic, modernist novel *Ulysses*, Joyce stages a virtuoso discussion in the National Library (chapter: “Scylla

and Charybdis”) where many themes so far mentioned appear, as well as others still to be mentioned. In his helpful notes, Declan Kiberd<sup>16</sup> writes: “The time is 2 p.m.; the organ, brain, the art, literature, the symbols, Hamlet and Shakespeare; and the Linati schema renders the sense as ‘two-edged dilemma.’” The concept of fatherhood, and a critique on the idea of author is the focus. There is evidence that William Shakespeare acted the part of the ghost-father in Hamlet. “Stephen... seems to suggest that the artist suffers real pain in the act of creation and that art is a way of knowing and suffering a self, the better to transcend it” (Kiberd in Joyce. 1014). Joyce needed to re-express and transmute the repeated claims in the *Odyssey* that Odysseus was “the most unfortunate of men.” We misread *Ulysses* if we do not respond to the pain that surrounds Bloom.

Interestingly, Joyce, Beauclerk, Michell and others focus



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their attention on Hamlet and the authorship question. “Oxford makes a convincing Hamlet – or vice versa,” concludes Michell.<sup>17</sup> If Hamlet is largely a self-portrait of its creator and the play depicts his situation, and if moreover he even reappears behind leading protagonists in later plays, then in the canon we are given clues to the inner turmoil of the playwright – and the most discussed play in the world. Through art, though “made

(*Treason, cont. from p. 9*)

tongue-tied by authority” (Sonnet 66), this hidden writer found a way not only to survive, but also to surmount his seemingly impossible life situation. This fact, sympathetically followed by Beauclerk, could increase our admiration for the Bard’s – and his biographer’s – achievement. How otherwise do we imagine that the great tragedies, the comedies with their subtle topical satire<sup>18</sup> and the late works could otherwise have been written, but from inner experience and supreme creative effort, using the theater as a mirror of his world?

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commentators have claimed; rather, he exposed it for what it was – a dangerous illusion – and supplanted it with his own profound vision of reality,” writes Beauclerk (248). He adds, though: “Oxford never abandoned the private mythology he shared with the queen, their own symbolic language that transcended the world of mundane politics.”

### The search for identity

We return now to Steiner, who takes up the theme of the search for identity at the deepest level in the introductory lecture of his course on Mark’s gospel (1912).<sup>19</sup> His remarks on *Hamlet*, seen in the light of recent research, throw a bright light on the authorship question. The lecturer sketches the East-West situation, mentioning the ancient spirituality of the East, but also five writers who profoundly influenced Western culture – David, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe. Steiner emphasizes that the five mentioned writers present a truer picture of events than outer historical accounts alone do. He also mentions the subtle reappearance of Eastern sentiments in the West during the nineteenth century, mentioning Schopenhauer and Hartmann (I found valuable the latter thinker’s comments on *The Philosophy of Freedom* [1894] – which lays the foundations of the poet’s philosophy of “what is”). Steiner goes on to sketch the profound effect of the Mystery of Golgotha, the death and resurrection of Christ, on souls who incarnated before and who reappeared, inwardly changed, after that Event. The concept of metamorphosis applied to human life had already been argued (1904).<sup>20</sup> As practical examples, Steiner takes two great souls, Empedocles and Hector of Troy, and their subsequent incarnations in the West.

Hector grew out of Troy. “He clung in the ancient way to his home city of Troy... a towering figure, a man of all-embracing humanity.” Steiner reveals: “The real figure underlying Hamlet, as presented by Shakespeare, is Hector. The same soul that lived in Hamlet lived in Hector.” The real Hamlet lived as a Danish prince “at one time” (in the eleventh century). But, we discover, the playwright fashions the account to end differently from what the chronicles relate. That fact is crucial. At the end of his play the stage is strewn with corpses – the military takes over. The result of systematic revenge, the playwright shows, leads to racial suicide. With Shakespeare’s next play, *Measure for Measure*, the theme of self-knowledge and forgiveness brings a new turn to a potentially tragic situation, traced by John Vyvyan.<sup>21</sup> Shakespeare’s characters begin to learn of the change at the heart of earth-evolution. This is not what we learn about the eleventh-century Amleth.

The five personalities whom Steiner mentions as molding culture are artists, that is, creators of stories, of myth, that which expresses lasting value and suggests polysemous meaning. The influence of their creations supersedes the limitations of their age, which leaves behind some issues. For example, King David, according to scholars, did not actually pen all the Psalms. He gave his name to a genre. The Psalms, among humankind’s first lyrics, are also prayers; taken by Richard Meux Benson as a whole and read as myth, the Psalter constitutes “a continuous epic of Messiah’s conflict with evil.”<sup>22</sup> Again, is Homer an individual, or a

figure who unites folk tradition? Modern scholars prefer the former view, on literary grounds. And, of course, Shakespeare is gaining interest today precisely in this connection of “who held the pen?” In his lecture, Steiner suggests that centuries hence the existence of Goethe will be contested. Little of him will be known – this, he even adds, will be “a good thing!” Not his entanglements, then, but Goethe’s poetical creation of Faust, the searcher for truth, is the important concern for posterity.

Poetic precision and penetration is recognized as essential for lasting perceptions, portraying the meta-historical significance of the historical figures. Empedocles “stands behind” Faust. Hector and Empedocles represent “a conclusion”; in their subsequent lives “great souls appear small.” Goethe, to us a solid enough historical figure, is the author chosen to be mentioned as one whose existence will be contested. Once again, please! In bypassing William Shakespeare, about whose life little is really known, is Steiner’s purpose ironical? Is he pointing by default to a hidden author? In 1912 the authorship question only occupied the attention of an “eccentric fringe.” Nevertheless, of the five writers, it is interesting that no less than three are attributed authors, or partly so, or even contested personalities. Steiner points to “the real figure underlying Hamlet, as presented by Shakespeare, is Hector.”

Another consideration that raises the context to the spiritual level is the significance of the Trojan War. Troy, says Steiner,<sup>23</sup> flourished in the age of ancient clairvoyance (Cassandra predicts the death of Hector), ruled by a priestly hierarchy. Troy had to fall to the Greeks, for the new intellectual consciousness had to develop with the spread of Hellenism. But now, at “the tremendous transition” beginning at the end of the fifteenth century CE, a new, or renewed consciousness starts to unfold. It seems not insignificant that Shakespeare’s contemporaries spoke of London as a “new Troy,” no doubt influenced by the myth-making magus John Dee and others. Brutus, great-grandson of Aeneas of the Trojan legend, for example, attended the Druid College near Totnes, Devon, before founding London, home of the later Globe Theatre.

Shakespeare devoted *Troilus and Cressida* – probably completed about the same time as *Hamlet* – to the Trojan War. Troilus, it has been pointed out, is really the romantic side of Hector, who himself personifies Troy. Troilus-Hector is, as it were, one man. Charles Williams points to the significance of this neglected play.<sup>24</sup> In Troilus’ crisis faced with Cressida’s philandering, the play pinpoints “the only interior crisis worth talking about.” Shakespearean crisis, he emphasizes, includes but exceeds philandering: “Something cannot be. Only it is.” Experience of this magnitude, Williams observes, citing more tragic cases, is “the change with which Shakespeare’s genius was concerned.” It took the rest of the Bard’s career to work out. Ted Hughes<sup>25</sup> comments on the myth – Keats’ “allegory” – that enabled the author to carry it out. *Venus and Adonis*, combined with its secular reversal *The Rape of Lucrece*, together yield the tragic formula, the “mythic equation” in evidence from *As You Like It* onwards (first performed in 1598), right into the late plays with their eventual overcoming of tragedy. The mythic equation is no theory; Hughes notes that it is also played out in the Catholic/Protestant conflict of the age.

### “The pen is mightier than the sword”

Speaking of the inspiration of the age and the importance of the first decade of the seventeenth century, Steiner (1917 and 1924) mentions four personalities – Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, Jakob Boehme and Jakob Balde. They shared the same Rosicrucian inspiration, represented on earth by “an initiated personality.” Who that personality was is contested; Friedrich Hiebel<sup>26</sup> suggests James I is meant, and Richard Ramsbotham<sup>27</sup> argues similarly. Steiner speaks of a dual stream flowing from Britain.



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Bacon activated an empirical, materialistic natural science. It was mitigated by another stream that, Steiner emphasizes, is crucial, “something which [the British, the Anglo-Saxon people] must not lose if they are not to fall utterly into materialism.”<sup>28</sup> The second stream, working against the grip of commercialism and materialism, derives from the “inoculations” initiated by James I.

The Bard managed to transform his conceivable initial, “official” task of justifying the Tudor monarchy. He who intensely pursued and portrayed the painful pathway of self-knowledge – which is the only real knowledge – was active mainly during Elizabeth’s reign. His offerings were also bound up with his relationship to her. James, taking over de Vere’s troupe the Lord

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

Chamberlain's Men and renaming them the King's Men, did his best to promote Shakespearean productions, that is, the living voice. Could these be part of the referred-to "inoculations" (an appropriate word, for the plays are written in the author's heart's blood)? The canon, the product of creative myth, is surely one, if not the only, major transforming influence in society. But how did James, in a capacity beyond his ambiguous earthly personality,



**Though he claimed the authorship question is not an issue, Northrop Frye – perhaps the most influential literary critic of the twentieth century – in his life's work on the whole "order of words" (Coleridge's phrase) has accounted for the origins of literature in myth, that is, stories about "what is." Oxfordians claim the Bard both lived his myth and re-expressed it in the canon. He develops all four of Frye's "modes": comedy, romance, tragedy, irony/satire.<sup>31</sup> Adonis-Oberon/Bottom-Hamlet-Troilus/Hector-Anthony and Venus-Titania-Gertrude-Cressida-Cleopatra are artistic creations based on real-life relationships. The perspective of the poets – that the Bard's life was "an allegory" (Keats), that his imagination was attracted to solve the deepest tragic issues (Williams), and the interior demands incumbent on a working-out of the "mythic equation" (Hughes) – appear to me to provide clinching concepts to reconcile apparently exclusive views arising from biographical and historical knowledge.**



inspire the sacrifices of the Bard? Clearly, more is meant than that James' *Daemonologie* (1597) provided some information for the witches in Macbeth. The verb "inspire," used in an esoteric context, would seem to indicate the spiritual, or mythical level. It took a poet to research this level in the Bard. Though Ted Hughes fails to mention King James, he delves deep into Jaques

(= Shax-père), as "self-representative," discussing how myth and reality intertwine all three of that name (a name not found in Shakespeare's sources): Melancholy Jaques, Jaques de Boys and Jaques le Grand.<sup>29</sup> *As You Like It* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (1598/9) mark the beginning of the Bard's plunge into creative integration. Do we not sense from now on a towering and informing human inspiration? The erudition of James (Jacob/Jaques) aside, his strong claim to the throne of England would have qualified him, at one level, as a usurping or "rival brother," with all the creative tension that inspires. The two brothers motif is also known as the Gemini myth. In *All's Well*, a third and sacred Jaques contains both "brothers" of the same name. However valid my initial suggestion here might appear as a way into this "significant mystery," the subsequent value of literature in an imperialist, consumer society is certainly inestimable – or subversive, depending on one's view. "Beneath the rule of men entirely great, / The pen is mightier than the sword," writes Edward Bulwer-Lytton<sup>30</sup> (perhaps with Heb. 4:12 in mind). This famous saying seems relevant. In early 1601, eight lines from the play *Sir Thomas More* were marked by a government censor for deletion, while executions for the Essex rebellion proceeded apace.

Though he claimed the authorship question is not an issue, Northrop Frye – perhaps the most influential literary critic of the twentieth century – in his life's work on the whole "order of words" (Coleridge's phrase) has accounted for the origins of literature in myth, that is, stories about "what is." Oxfordians claim the Bard both lived his myth and re-expressed it in the canon. He develops all four of Frye's "modes": comedy, romance, tragedy, irony/satire.<sup>31</sup> Adonis-Oberon/Bottom-Hamlet-Troilus/Hector-Anthony and Venus-Titania-Gertrude-Cressida-Cleopatra are artistic creations based on real-life relationships. The perspective of the poets – that the Bard's life was "an allegory" (Keats), that his imagination was attracted to solve the deepest tragic issues (Williams), and the interior demands incumbent on a working-out of the "mythic equation" (Hughes) – appear to me to provide clinching concepts to reconcile apparently exclusive views arising from biographical and historical knowledge. Oxfordians, for example, claim that references to contemporary events cease after 1604 (Anderson 360); those who claim to detect the influence of James I assume certain plays were written after James came to England in 1603. *The Tempest*, we know, was performed for the betrothal of Princess Elizabeth and Frederick, the Elector Palatine, 27 Dec. 1612. This does not mean that it was written just prior to that occasion, though some scholars speculate that the nuptial masque could have been added. The historian Frances Yates writes on the early years of the seventeenth century as an attempted "Elizabethan revival"<sup>32</sup> of ideals, mythology and philosophy. An in-depth scrutiny should clear up the riddles, especially once the union of myth and biography is recognized. Why else does *As You Like It* end with Jaques going to the empty cave? Why else indeed does Haydn accompany "Go forth and multiply" (The Creation) with a plangent cello?

Steiner advocates raising perception to the spiritual level where intentions are decided. Nevertheless, he also points out, that the consequences and, most importantly, free deeds are necessarily worked out on the earthly plane. In his 1912 lecture,

Steiner chose to emphasize the writers and poets (= “creators”) at the expense, I suggest, of the soldiers and politicians, precisely to point to the Christ-Impulse as work in the world. Even today the older style of presenting history in schools and on the media persists, championing the campaigners as heroes. But a revenge ethic, or at the very least locating the enemy “out there,” is to be superseded. According to the poets, and supremely and consistently according to the Bard himself, a love of power has to change to the power of love.

So I see an initial problem with the Hector–Hamlet pairing. Homer certainly portrays Hector as Steiner reports. But Hamlet is much more than the dithering cynic seen by the literary critics of Steiner’s day, and even our day. “Shakespeare’s Hamlet” – Steiner’s phrase in the lecture of 1912 – succumbs to the temptations of his father’s impure ghost, demanding revenge. Hamlet’s human nobility has to be systematically destroyed (Vyvyan). This situation is transcended in the later plays. “Hamlet,” as the playwright’s persona, does develop his inherent humanity, eventually metamorphosing into the magus Prospero, who forgives those who had usurped him of his dukedom.

### **Interior sovereignty**

Applying Steiner’s imaginative vision of history to the very words of the lecture itself, then in Hector-Hamlet I see Steiner could be pointing to the previous incarnation of the playwright himself. The eleventh-century prince Amleth, who provides the basis of the earthly story, disappears from view. The comments on Hector lead to the real focus of Steiner’s comments, though it certainly appears that naming the person who wrote the canon is not his overt concern. Recent discoveries now suggest that such a steaming hot potato would have had to be avoided a century or so ago. The detective work, too, to unravel the biggest literary hoax of all time – made for political reasons – had to be left for those coming after. My critics might agree with me that the world-teacher Rudolf Steiner is emphatically focusing his energies on proclaiming the supremacy of mythical vision, avoiding all comment on the family broils of the governing élite of Tudor England.

Could Steiner in 1912 be pointing by default to the ultimate inspiration of one in particular of the five mentioned authors? This suggestion is not open to strict intellectual proof, which annoys my critics. Steiner was not in the habit of getting things wrong, which annoys his critics. However it is relatively easy to collect all Steiner’s remarks on Shakespeare, including the early theater reviews and a report on an educational evening-class for working men in Berlin. A full study could evaluate all the remarks. Clearly, that which as a spiritual researcher Steiner later reveals – in the lecture of 1912 and the later karma lectures to the Anthroposophical Society – is of a different order because the lecturer is addressing different issues. Not claiming to penetrate the “significant mystery” entirely, my observations simply take account of the historical and political situation of the Elizabethan age, as well as the situation 100 years ago. Both suggest that Steiner is asking his students to inquire of their own hearts how they are responding to the results of spiritual research. S.T. Coleridge,<sup>33</sup>

poet, philosopher and founder of modern literary criticism, appealed to the same tribunal with regard to the front man:

Ask your own hearts, – ask your own common sense – to conceive the possibility of this man... being the anomalous, the wild, the irregular, genius of our daily criticism! What! Are we to have miracles in sport? Or, I speak reverently, does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?

This is one reader’s response to a unique scenario. Broadly speaking, early in life I had a rather sentimental view of a chameleon, instinctive playwright, but now I have been shown the disaffected pariah, bastard, prodigy and nameless man who suffered an acute identity crisis – all for love. It cannot be gainsaid that the search for the human being behind the literary creations



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comes into sharp focus when, in the case of Hamlet, creation and creator unite. The literary creation Hamlet reveals the author and his world, the Elizabethan court. If Beauclerk and the Oxfordians are right, the author himself, a cultural leader of our age, cannot be a country person. Shakespearean Stratford is largely an eighteenth-century invention of playwright and actor David Garrick and others, building up the rustic image the politicians wanted posterity to believe.

If this is so, the Bard would be the brilliant, unpredictable, troubled aristocrat at the heart of government, torn between feudal lord and bohemian. As an enthusiastic and, like his “rival brother” James I, sometimes a “difficult patron” of the reborn theater who kept at least one troupe of actors throughout his adult life, his theatrical career provided a mirror “to catch the conscience” of the Queen. At the same time The Lord Chamberlain’s/King’s Men perform in the public theaters. The Bard educates posterity, basically by founding the artistic use of the English language. Thirty-five of the thirty-six plays in the First Folio concern royalty and ducal

*(Continued on p. 14)*

(*Treason, cont. from p. 13*)

personalities, focusing on their internal troubles and eventual transformation. In the playwright's Hamlet – who himself wrote for and rehearsed a group of players, of which the leading actor demonstrated a speech from the fall of Troy, and who with his dying breath bids Horatio --

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath  
in pain, to tell my story.

-- it is hard to disbelieve that we see portrayed the man who wrote Shakespeare.

In speaking to the eurythmists about the art of visible speech,<sup>34</sup> the first poet Steiner mentions is Shakespeare. He speaks of this poet as the chief wordsmith at a formative stage in the growth of the language. Max Müller (1861) claimed Shakespeare's vocabulary was 15,000 words (later scholars claim up to 21,000), about twice as much as Milton. The *Oxford English Dictionary* credits Shakespeare as using 3,200 words for the first time. That is, Shakespeare is sovereign of a much more extensive kingdom than that of the crowned monarch. If, then, Edward de Vere is the hidden author, he paid the personal price involved in having to renounce a royal destiny and indeed his very name as an author. The evidence is there in the Sonnets, the Bible markings and the relationship of the canon to the biography. In exchanging a temporal eminence, the poet "lived the life of allegory," a "figurative" life for the sake of all users of the world's most-used tongue. His influence reaches in translation even beyond this, of course. Inspired by his treacherous Venus, the Dark Lady, internalizing all youthful military ambition, and, deeper still, changing a pre-Christian condition of soul by internalizing and thus eventually surmounting all the thwarting circumstances of his life, the man who wrote Shakespeare became a spiritual world-sovereign whose reign has no foreseeable end. "In some way or other we in the English-speaking world have all become his subjects," concludes Beauclerk (387).

### Conclusion

"Well, so what?" could be a response. In which case, a final personal word should be allowed. If the historical records of the makings of our modern world have been



**I see an initial problem with the Hector–Hamlet pairing. Homer certainly portrays Hector as Steiner reports. But Hamlet is much more than the dithering cynic seen by the literary critics of Steiner's day. "Shakespeare's Hamlet" – Steiner's phrase in the lecture of 1912 – succumbs to the temptations of his father's impure ghost, demanding revenge. Hamlet's human nobility has to be systematically destroyed (Vyvyan). This situation is transcended in the later plays...the playwright's persona does develop his inherent humanity, eventually metamorphosing into the magus Prospero, who forgives those who had usurped him of his dukedom.**



manipulated, history needs rewriting, its implications for our age reassessed. But this does not reduce art to biography and history. Do we really imagine the authorship question is superfluous, since we "have the plays"? But do we have them? For one lover of the Bard at least, the work of scholars to reveal the mythical and satirical inspirations of the flesh and blood author opens a deeper appreciation

and renewed respect for the person whose sacrifices led to sovereign art. Sitting at his feet, I learn even more about the creative process sustained against the heaviest odds. The Bard now emerges as probably the foremost subversive, dissident author – he is our contemporary.


To me it is not a matter of indifference who is venerated as the leading writer in English. I am not happy to remain in beautiful aesthetic or theoretical realms divorced from the rest of life. Historical context and biographical basis enhance my appreciation, for example, of Bach's Chaconne – an icon of Western art – written as a tombeau, a response to the death of the composer's wife, as well as to celebrate the Easter events. This Bach does through hidden chorales, an application of the Rosicrucian verse as a structural principle, and much more, as Helga Thoene shows in her detailed analysis of the scores of Bach's works for solo violin.<sup>35</sup> Or, once again, of Beethoven's works born out of suffering heroically borne, especially the late works written after a prolonged period of interior crisis. A creative response acknowledges the Christ-Impulse, in which death makes sense of life. This, to repeat, is manifestly neither an ideological statement, nor subject to a sell-by date. The scale of achievement is, so to speak, vertical – certainly, with an historical, or horizontal context. Ben Jonson knew the Bard was "not of an age, but for all time!" In the present painful times, it is important to understand, to see through certain things. Moreover, in the current squeeze on art that is forcing us all to be clear about our priorities and to commit ourselves, it is timely to realize to what good company all striving artists may be privileged to claim they belong.

Beyond stating my belief that nobody saw earlier or further on the authorship question than Steiner, and who consequently provides the cornerstone, I am perhaps grateful to the Cecils – the Machiavellian villains of the piece – for being the sand in the oyster. "To understand everything," claims novelist George Eliot, "would be to pardon everything." Despite disagreement concerning some details in the sketch outlined here, what essential facts are now missing from the story?


## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Alan Stott, "Shakespeare: Who held the pen?" *Shakespeare Matters*, Summer 2007; also *Newsletter of the Section for the Arts of Eurythmy, Speech and Music*, No. 47, Dornach. Michaelmas 2007. Internet access via the Fellowship or the Goetheanum websites, or direct [www.alansnotes.co.uk](http://www.alansnotes.co.uk) (articles also in German).
- <sup>2</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Karma of Untruthfulness*, vol. 1. GA 174. Rudolf Steiner Press. London 1992. 131. Again in: Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, Vol. 2. Lecture 12 April 1924. GA 236. Internet access, German originals – <http://fvn-rs.net/index>.
- <sup>3</sup> *Shakespeare's Last Plays*. Routledge. London 1975. 131. [American title: *Magic and Mystery in Shakespeare's Last Plays*].
- <sup>4</sup> Charles Beauclerk, *Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom: The true history of Shakespeare and Elizabeth*. Grove Press. New York 2010.
- <sup>5</sup> John Michell, *Who Wrote Shakespeare?* Thames & Hudson. London & New York 1996.
- <sup>6</sup> Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky, "A Moveable Feast: Sources, Chronology and Design of Shakespeare's Tempest" (forthcoming). See article: <http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/tempest/kositsky-stritmatter%20Tempest%20Table.htm>.
- On the general question of dating: [http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/moore\\_datesofplays.html](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/moore_datesofplays.html)
- <sup>7</sup> Mark Anderson, *Shakespeare by Another Name. The life of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, the Man who was Shakespeare*. Gotham Books. New York 2005.
- <sup>8</sup> Eric Sams, *The Real Shakespeare: Reviving the early years, 1564-1594*. Yale University Press. New Haven & London 1995. A thorough and original attempt to map the first 30 years from the Stratfordian view.
- <sup>9</sup> Alastair Fowler, *Triumphal forms: Structural patterns in Elizabethan poetry*. OUP, Oxford 1970. 183-197.
- <sup>10</sup> Hank Whittemore, *The Monument*. Meadow Geese Press. Marshfield Hills, Massachusetts 2008. Websites: <http://shakespearesmonument.com>. <http://shakespearestreason.com>, etc.
- <sup>11</sup> C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century excluding Drama*. OUP. Oxford 1954. 505.
- <sup>12</sup> Roger A. Stritmatter, *The Marginalia of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible: Providential discovery, literary reasoning, and historical consequence*. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Massachusetts Amherst. Feb. 2001. Oxenford Press. Northampton, MA 01060. Obtainable through the Shakespeare

Fellowship website, and online: <http://shake-speares-bible.com/dissertation/>  
<sup>13</sup> The portrait by Gheeraerts is reproduced in



**“Well, so what?” could be a response. In which case, a final personal word should be allowed. If the historical records of the makings of our modern world have been manipulated, history needs rewriting, its implications for our age reassessed. But this does not reduce art to biography and history. Do we really imagine the authorship question is superfluous, since we “have the plays”? But do we have them? For one lover of the Bard at least, the work of scholars to reveal the mythical and satirical inspirations of the flesh and blood author opens a deeper appreciation and renewed respect for the person whose sacrifices led to sovereign art. Sitting at his feet, I learn even more about the creative process sustained against the heaviest odds. The Bard now emerges as probably the foremost subversive, dissident author – he is our contemporary.**



Beauclerk (see endnote 3). The van der Werff portrait in Trinity College, Dublin, is reproduced (opp. p. 129) and discussed

in: Jean Overton Fuller, Sir Francis Bacon: a biography. George Mann of Maidstone 1994. 349-51.

- <sup>14</sup> Queen Margaret of Navarre [tr. Princess Elizabeth Tudor], *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*. Asher & Co, London 1897. Reprint edition, Kessinger 2007. 83.
- <sup>15</sup> On King Lear, see Shellee Hendricks "The Curiosity of Nations: King Lear and the Incest Prohibition." Master's thesis. McGill Univ., Montreal 1999 (downloadable from the internet).
- <sup>16</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses*. Intro. & notes by Declan Kiberd. Bodley Head 1992/Penguin Books 2000.
- <sup>17</sup> Michell, 169. After a 2004 lecture Michell (1933-2009) said to me that the evidence linking de Vere and the Sonnets fits "hand in glove." This was before Whittemore's definitive publication appeared in 2008 (n. 9).
- <sup>18</sup> Beauclerk offers some revealing interpretations, e.g., of the early play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (200-207). *MND* may have been performed for the marriage of de Vere's daughter Elizabeth to the Earl of Derby, prob. on Jan. 26 1595, and also probably performed for the second marriage of Southampton's foster mother Mary Browne Wriothesley to Sir Thomas Heneage, May 2, 1595, then finally revised and performed for the wedding of Southampton (referred to as a "little changeling boy" and also represented by Demetrius) to Elizabeth Vernon in 1598. The historical personalities are all represented in the play (see also Anderson 287-88).
- <sup>19</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Gospel of St Mark*. Lecture I, Basel 15 Sept. 1912. GA 139. Anthroposophic Press, New York/Rudolf Steiner Press, London 1986. Internet access: [www.rsarchive.org](http://www.rsarchive.org) (website for texts in German, see n. 2).
- <sup>20</sup> Rudolf Steiner. *Theosophy*. Chapter 2. GA 9. Germ. orig. ed. 1904. Internet access: [www.sacred-texts.com/eso/theo/index.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/eso/theo/index.htm), or [http://wn.rsarchive.org/Books/GA009/English/AP1971/GA009\\_index.html](http://wn.rsarchive.org/Books/GA009/English/AP1971/GA009_index.html)
- <sup>21</sup> John Vyvyan, *The Shakespearean Ethic*. Chatto & Windus. London 1959. This is a much admired study.
- <sup>22</sup> Richard Meux Benson, *The War-Songs of the Prince of Peace*. 2 vols. John Murray. London 1901. This translation and commentary is in a class of its own.
- <sup>23</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Lecture Berlin*, 28 October 1904.
- <sup>24</sup> Charles Williams, *The English Poetic Mind* (1932). Reissued Russell & Russell. New York 1963. 59.

(Concordia, cont. from p. 1)



**Left to right: Concordia's Vice-President for business, Gary Withers, with Vero Nihil Verius Award Winners Betsy Roe (for her father Dick Roe), Sally Mosher, Roland Emmerich, and SAC Director Wright at award ceremonies.**

come to the present version and one thing that moved him was the line in the script (by John Orloff), "Words are more powerful than swords." He added (perhaps with tongue in cheek) that he didn't know "what a hotbed of controversy he was getting into." Dr. Wright thanked Emmerich, saying that "his story was worth telling in view of the fact that we have long been fed a story that was simply implausible." Defending his interpretation of the film as presenting the "emotional truth" rather than the literal one, Emmerich pointed to other movies that were mainly subjective interpretations of what happened, such as *Shakespeare in Love* or *The Bridge on the River Kwai*.

"Since the beginning of time," he continued, "writers have had to rearrange events to tell a good story," and pointed out that "Shakespeare himself told the stories that he wanted to tell, whether historically perfect or not." Hank Whittemore agreed, saying that everyone knew that *Shakespeare in Love* was "pure fantasy" yet it was still a very popular film because it was set within the framework of real history and

real characters and attempted to connect the author's life with his works.

### **Roe, Mosher, and Emmerich Honored**

One of the Conference highlights was the presentation of awards at the banquet on Wednesday evening following the screening of *Anonymous*. The opening speaker was Conference Chairman Wright, who acknowledged all of the attendees for their willingness to challenge the "stifling orthodoxy that does not encourage questioning." "Concordia University," he stated, "is committed to the quest for truth and the students at the University show a healthy sense of exploration."

The first award was presented to scholar, philanthropist, lawyer, and property developer Richard Paul Roe, who sadly passed away earlier this year. Dr. Wright described Roe as "a jovial and intellectual man who made possible the Shakespeare Research Centre at Concordia." His breakthrough book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, establishes a compelling connection between Oxford's travels to Italy and the

descriptions of Italy in the plays. The award was accepted by Roe's daughter Betsy. A dancer and choreographer, Betsy Roe said that she "is an artist because of my father." She noted that her father had retired at age 55 to devote the rest of his life to research on the Shakespeare Authorship question, following Joseph Campbell's advice to "follow your bliss."

The second award was given to Sally Mosher, a Southern California attorney who is also an accomplished harpsichordist. Mosher is an expert in the role of jewels in 16<sup>th</sup> century England and is the author of the book *People and Their Context: A Chronology of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century World*. Accepting her award, Mosher said, "I enjoy doing what I'm doing - research on Oxford over the last 20 years and have discovered that the evidence for Oxford is compelling."

Director Roland Emmerich received the *Vero Nihil Verius* Award. His films, such as *2012*, *Independence Day*, *Godzilla*, and *The Day After Tomorrow* have grossed over \$1 billion in the United States, making him the country's 14th-highest grossing director of all time. In introducing him, Dr. Wright stated that through his film *Anonymous* "Emmerich has taken one large step towards the resolution of the authorship question." In his remarks, Emmerich said that "there is not much knowledge out there" and that he is "hopeful his film will move the issue to the forefront and begin a groundswell."

### **Conference Presenters**

The 15<sup>th</sup> annual SASC welcomed both familiar and first-time presenters, including such distinguished contributors as Professors Roger Stritmatter, Alan Nelson, Michael Egan, Joel Davis, and Sam Saunders, researchers Earl Showerman, William J. Ray, Sylvia Holmes and Bonner Cutting, authors Sally Mosher and Lynne Kositsky, and actors Hank Whittemore and Michael Dunn. The conference also featured several panels, discussion groups, as well as a performance by actor Michael Dunn of his one-man play, *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Sonneteer*.



## Dazzling Jewels

Sally Mosher opened the Conference with a paper, "Politics, Symbolism, Finance: The Role of Jewels in the Age of Shakespeare." Mosher described the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the great age of the goldsmith, and emphasized that Elizabeth's wearing valuable and famous jewels projected a "royal persona," part of her highly successful display of power and strength. Mosher quoted one of Elizabeth's counselors who declared that her bejeweled appearance was royal, but not sumptuous or excessive.

Jewels communicated meanings through symbolism, reflecting the period's



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continuing belief in the mystical properties of gems and the symbolism of colors and flowers. Elizabeth is very often depicted wearing black and white in portraits, the combination of colors symbolizing virginity. She often wore white, symbolizing faith, purity and humility, as well as youthfulness.

Jewels were far more valuable in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and were used to secure royal power. Philip II of Spain and others sold

or pawned crown jewels to finance armies. Jewels also facilitated international diplomacy: They were used as gifts to favorites, played an important role in royal weddings, and were used to cement treaties and alliances. In 1587, the Queen received eighty jeweled gifts at New Year's celebrations, and favored subjects were painted showing miniatures she had given them.

## Shakespeare's Will: What's in - What's out

Bonner Miller Cutting, an independent researcher from Houston, continued with a fascinating paper titled "Shakespeare's Will Considered too Curiously." Cutting, who has written extensively on the subject of the "Last Will and Testament" of William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon, said that most Shakespeare scholars dismiss the will as an enigma. A.L. Rowse spent only three paragraphs discussing it in *Shakespeare the Man*, and the eminent Shakespearean scholar E.K. Chambers defensively offered that "a will is not a literary auto-biography."

The consensus, according to Cutting, is that the will was most likely written by a scrivener, but had to have been approved by Shakspeare of Stratford; she believes that in it we are hearing Shakspeare's authentic voice. Quoting Professor E.A.J. Honigmann, the will "gives us glimpses of the solitary inner man," Cutting commented that, while the will was typical of the time and written in a standard format, there is nothing in it that reveals it as the product of the greatest writer in the English language. Significant items missing from the will include any mention of intellectual or cultural property, including books or libraries, manuscripts or notebooks, furniture to hold books, pens and paper, tapestries, maps, pictures (what we would now call paintings), musical instruments, theatrical memorabilia, shares in a theater or theatrical company, money left for the repair of bridges and roads, charitable contributions to churches, hospitals, prisons, annuities left for education, scholarships, or, surprisingly, any legacies for the Stratford Grammar School.

The will opens with a religious preamble taken from a standard Protestant formula book instead of the author's original

composition, an oddity for a famous writer. The testator assigns his five houses and his other real estate to daughter Susanna,



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bequeaths 300 pounds in cash to daughter Judith, leaves monetary gifts to Stratford friends, and, famously, his second best bed

(Continued on p. 18)

*(Concordia, cont. from p. 17)*

to his wife. The much celebrated bequest to the actors is an interlineation inserted into the will after it was first drafted.

Cutting noted that Shakspeare did not name his wife the executrix and residual legatee of his estate, both important appointments that most testators give to their spouses. Shakspeare does not give his wife the respect of addressing her by name, and, even more significantly, does not assign property for her maintenance. According to Cutting, it is clear that Shakspeare coldly and deliberately excluded her from a proper inheritance.

Additional odd features include the fact that he provided a house for his sister but not his wife; the entire three-page document is one long run-on sentence without punctuation (odd for a writer); and, as the will comes to a merciful close, it was drafted so that it only needed to be sealed by Shakspeare, not signed by him. Apparently, the scrivener did not expect him to sign it, another strange omission for a writer.

The orthodox rationale for this document with its many odd features was that it was prepared in great haste for a sick and dying man. However, such a claim is contradicted by strong evidence that the latter two pages were written prior to January of 1616. Cutting submits the first page was dictated in January of 1616 and finalized in March, at which time the two pages from an earlier will were updated and added to the new first page. Cutting concluded with the observation that the will reflects the life and mind of a successful businessman, not a literary genius.

### Refuting Oxfordian Claims

The final speaker of the day was Alan Nelson, Professor Emeritus in the Department of English at the University of California at Berkeley. He spoke on the topic, "William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon: Thoughts of an Old-Tyme Scholar." Nelson began by discussing the lack of impact that anti-Stratfordians have had in the marketplace of ideas, asserting the fact that at the World Shakespeare Congress attended by 3000 people, there was not a single paper that favored the anti-Stratfordian point of view, an im-

portant indicator how anti-Stratfordians are regarded in the academic community. Nelson remarked, however, that the "unlikely" plot of the film *Anonymous* has caused the academic world to respond. Stratfordians have set up an online conference with Shakespeare scholars from around the world known as "60 Minutes



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He then talked about the purpose of a "token book" in the Elizabethan age. This was a device to discover which Catholics

had violated church requirements that every adult attend communion three times a year.

Tokens were sold to everyone in the household and their names were registered in a token book. If they went to communion, they would turn their tokens in. Interestingly, one of the names found in the token book was that of Edmund Shakespeare, claimed to be the younger brother of William, who was listed as a player. Nelson noted that Edmund's presence in the book was evidence that the Shakespeares were a theatrical family.

Nelson discussed two other main points: Contrary to Oxfordian claims that Stratford-on-Avon was a backwater town without culture, the birthplace of William Shaksper indeed had books and libraries like most towns in England at the time, and that John Marshall, a chaplain in Stratford, had hundreds of books in his library. He also mentioned that John Brownsword, referred to by Professor Nelson as "the finest Latin poet in England," was a schoolmaster in Stratford, and that all the schoolmasters who taught at the grammar school had MA degrees from Oxford University and were expert Latinists.

### Looking for Richard

Michael Egan, former Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts and Scholar in Residence at Brigham Young University in Hawaii, spoke on "The Essex Rebellion and *Richard II*: Why Wasn't Shakespeare Arrested?" Referring to the commonly accepted idea that Shakespeare's *Richard II* was performed on the eve of the Essex uprising, he asserted that it was unlikely that that play was shown. Its presentation would have tipped the conspirators' hand if they were planning to depose the Queen. Also, as reported public attendance was light, staging it probably would not have resulted in much support for the Essex cause.

The play that was supposedly performed was described as "old and out of use," hardly an apt description for one no older than four or five years. Indeed, Queen Elizabeth might have been referring to a really old play when she said that this play was performed over forty times

in streets and houses. If we accept the fact that *Richard II* was “out of use,” how would it have been possible for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men to mount a production of it on short notice?

Additionally, according to Egan, it is not logical that *Richard II* was performed, as Richard is presented as a sympathetic figure and the play endorses the divine right of kings. Egan speculated that the play might have been *Richard III* (as suggested in the film *Anonymous*), but noted there is no evidence to support this idea. It was also unlikely to have been *Richard II, Part I* (also known as *Thomas of Woodstock*), as that play does not portray Richard II’s assassination.

Egan concluded that it is most likely that no play was performed. “We’ve all been gulled,” he said, adding that the reports of the play were an “evidentiary fraud” introduced by the prosecution to support its claims about Essex’s murderous intentions towards the queen. That is why neither Shakespeare nor the Lord Chamberlain’s Men were ever arrested.

### **Orthodox Responses to the Oxfordian Challenge**

Next were two illuminating panel discussions. The first panel consisted of Professor Roger Stritmatter, Dr. Earl Showerman, Lynne Kositsky, Bill Boyle, William Ray, and Bonner Cutting, on “Assessing Orthodox Responses to the Anti-Stratfordian Challenge.” The panel discussed the variety of orthodox responses to the authorship question, from the slanderous to the intellectually provocative. Professor Stritmatter introduced the topic by citing three forums now used to discuss the authorship question: the Internet, orthodox publications, and Oxfordian publications such as *Brief Chronicles* and the newsletters of the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society; he noted two Fellowship members were especially active in on Internet authorship blogs.

Award-winning novelist Lynne Kositsky answered Professor Nelson’s boasts by sharing her experiences with the World Shakespeare Conference and the Shakespeare Association of America. She sent an abstract to the SAA about

*The Tempest*, asking to be put on their schedule of presenters at their next meeting. She was told, however, that her paper



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did not address the topic of the seminar. After submitting another outline, she also received a rejection, this time stating that “the same applies to your fuller outline.”

When she attempted to enroll in a seminar sponsored by the SAA, she was told that the seminar was filled.

Stritmatter told the sorry of being asked to participate in a debate on the subject of, “Was William Shakespeare Too Dumb to Be the Author of the Plays?” The promotional material for the debate, however, said that the evidence was overwhelming for William Shakespeare, that we should come to the debate and “put an end to this nonsense.” It was then that Stritmatter decided he wanted no further part in the proceedings.

Kositsky continued by denouncing the “tendentious rhetoric” of Scott McCrea’s *Shakespeare, The Case for Shakespeare: An End to the Authorship Question*, a book that compares at some length the theory of Oxford’s authorship to holocaust denial. Kositsky called it the McCrea book a “disgusting and degrading book that trivializes the holocaust.”

The next panelist was librarian and longtime Oxfordian lecturer Bill Boyle, who asserted that Stratfordians do not want to engage in one-on-one debates with Oxfordians. In the early 90s, however, he said there was a different, more open environment. With the recent books of Greenblatt and Shapiro, however, a power shift has taken place. Now James Shapiro, author of *Contested Will*, has become the chief spokesman for the Stratfordians, an author whose stated mission is to discredit the Oxfordian cause.

Bonner Cutting joined the discussion saying that “with the ‘Berlin Wall’ of academia, we have to work hard to get little sun breaks.” She mentioned two Stratfordian fallacies in logical thinking: 1) ad hominem arguments such as James Shapiro’s character assassinations of Mark Twain, Sigmund Freud, and Thomas Looney, and 2) appeals to authority, such as citing expertise and credentials of those academics who support the orthodox theory. Academia, she asserted, “does not have a monopoly on smart people, it does not self-regulate, it self-replicates.”

The panel then heard from Dr. Earl Showerman, who shared his experience of taking a class in Shakespeare Studies recently. When one student asked the Department Chairman about the authorship

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question, he was asked, "You aren't one of those people who thinks Queen Elizabeth wrote Shakespeare, are you?" Showerman said that when he tried to sign up for a class after he had voiced his opinion on the subject, he was told there was no room. Showerman remarked, "He knew I was going to be a troublemaker." Showerman concluded his remarks by declaring that the Stratfordians are "obsessed with autobiography," but in reality, it is political allegory, not autobiography.

An independent scholar from Willets, California, William J. Ray examined James Shapiro's *Contested Will* as a work designed to put down the Oxfordians. "Resentment," he said, "shows in his style and integrity." According to Ray, "Shapiro knows he's right but doesn't want to convey anger so he pulls his punches." He resorts to the cliché that it is hardly possible to turn autobiography into fiction and he compares the details of Oxford's life to Baconian ciphers. Ray stated that Shapiro's book is "empty of deep conviction" and concluded that "we are witnessing the death of commitment that the author was a human being who lived in a historical context and who had a life." [Editor's note: see also Ray's article starting on page 24 of this issue].

### **Fascinating, Mysterious, Difficult, and Important**

Professor Daniel Wright introduced the second panel discussion, "Unraveling the Politics Behind the Authorship Question." Participants included Bill Boyle and author, playwright, and professional actor Hank Whittemore. Boyle began the discussion by tracing the history of the Prince Tudor controversy. He began by pointing to the statement made by Percy Allen in 1939 in response to criticism in a "Supplement to the Shakespeare Fellowship Newsletter." There, Percy asserted that the inevitable final phase of the authorship debate is in trying to solve the puzzle. "We are endeavoring single-mindedly," he said, "to ascertain the truth, in this most fascinating, mysterious, difficult, and important literary-historical problem."

Boyle observed that "it is of course important to convince the wider world that

Oxford was the true Shakespeare, but the larger question – an inescapable question – is how and why this incredible injustice happened in the first place." He said that the lists of facts about Southampton and Oxford are the key to the proposition that the debate controversy will not end until



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all the "inescapable" questions arising from these facts have been answered. In the end, however, Boyle argued that "such 'inescapable questions' can only be answered with theories. What is at stake

in understanding the Shakespeare Mystery is... understanding."

The most formidable counterarguments in recent years have been letters in which Oxford's mother (Margery Golding) and Southampton's mother (Mary Browne) refer to themselves as the "natural mothers" of their respective children, but Boyle responded that unanswered questions remain, such as "What do the letters mean? Are the mothers telling the truth? Can the imprisoned 2nd Earl really be Southampton's father? What does the fact that Oxford changed his signature after the death of the Queen say about his relationship with the Queen?"

Boyle also listed facts supporting the Prince Tudor theory. These include that the poet, in the first 17 Sonnets, urges the Fair Youth (Southampton) to marry and calls him "my sovereign;" the public dedication by Shakespeare of *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece* to Southampton; the fact that the pseudonymous poem *Willobvie His Avisia* alludes to both William Shakespeare and Henry Wriothesley along with "suitors" Robert Dudley and Robert Devereux, all gathered together to "woo" the chaste Avisia (Queen Elizabeth); the fact that Southampton was sentenced to death for his part in the Essex Rebellion but was not executed; that all of his properties were restored to him after his release from the Tower; and that he was arrested on the night of Oxford's death, only to be released the next day. Boyle wondered if there is indeed a "correct" answer to the authorship question.

Hank Whittemore pointed out that "aristocrats used poetry and verse to persuade." As an example, he pointed to a 285-line poem to the Queen by the Earl of Essex, written while he was awaiting execution, which includes the words, "I love you," and expresses his service to the Queen. Whittemore said that "this may have been romantic but we will never know." There is evidence, according to Whittemore, that an unnamed "goodly boy" was born in 1573, but questions whether the birth was a result of sexual relations between the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Southampton and his wife. He noted that there is no evidence that Southampton's wife ever visited him in the Tower (when the child would have been conceived), and

when his father-in-law visited, he spoke of his wife's "fury" against him.

### Hidden Corners that Whisper

The Conference then welcomed Shakespeare Fellowship President and retired physician, Dr. Earl Showerman, who talked on the subject, "Shakespeare and Venice: A Review of Recent Literature." Showerman listed several new books on the subject, including *Shakespeare in Venice*, by Graham Holderness; *Visions of Venice in Shakespeare*, by Laura Tosi and Shaul Bossi; *Shakespeare in Venice: Exploring the City with Shylock and Othello*, by Shaul Bossi and Alberto Toso Fei; and *Othello, Moor of Venice*, edited by Ren Draya and Richard Whalen.

According to Showerman, Bossi and Fei note allusions to many Venetian places and customs in Shakespeare's dramas. They asserted that his work displays knowledge of geography, history, culture as well as monuments, foreign military leaders, knowledge of the Cabala-inspired passages in *The Merchant of Venice*, and concluded that "the temptation is strong to believe that Shakespeare traveled to Italy," as there are "hidden corners that seem to whisper Shakespeare was here." Holderness, however, asserted that the geography in the plays was "poetic and imaginative" rather than indicating a bodily presence in Italy. He said that though Shakespeare's sources were not translated into English, he knew others who could read Italian.

Showerman contradicted Holderness' conclusions, stating that "over the past century many scholars have demonstrated that the playwright had a remarkable familiarity with Venetian culture, trade, geography, law, Jews and 'conversos' [Jews and Muslims who converted to Christianity in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries], and that he made reference to specific places and incidents associated with the Veneto." Showerman pointed out that William Farina, in *De Vere as Shakespeare*, calls attention to the work of Professor Brian Pullan of Manchester University. Thirty years ago Pullan published the first of a series of reports on Gaspar Ribeiro, a trader and moneylender who might have served as the prototype for Shylock. Ribeiro was well known for his interest in money and, like Shylock, dealt in precious jewels and

stones. Showerman thought it highly probable that Oxford knew Ribeiro, because he was known to frequent the Church of Santa Maria Formosa during his Italian tour, the parish where Ribeiro lived. The fact



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that Oxford was forced to borrow money from a Venetian moneylender in order to continue his travels is another reason he might have known Ribeiro.

### Secret in Venice

Other speakers included Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable Board Member, Sylvia Holmes, who spoke on the subject, "Othello and Desdemona's Secret Meeting Place in Venice." In *Othello* (Act I, Scene III), Othello orders the First Senator to "Send for the lady to the Sagittary, and let her speak of me before her father." The word "sagittary" is defined as "A centaur; a fabulous being, half man, half horse, armed with a bow and quiver," but the mystery we are dealing with is to discover whether the play refers to an actual place in Venice.

One of the strongest possibilities, according to Holmes, is a sagittary that appears on the clock in an archway in St. Mark's Place in Venice, where the entire building is dedicated to making the clock work. Holmes noted that the clock has all the attributes of the sagittary as described in the play, including an outdoor roof. In *Othello*, there is also a four-minute monologue that takes place at the Doge's Palace, which is but a four minute walk from St. Mark's Church.

### God's Arithmetic

Roger Stritmatter, PhD, Assistant Professor of English at Coppin State University in Baltimore, read from "God's Arithmetic," a chapter of his forthcoming book. In 1597 English churchman and author Francis Meres published a theological tract, *God's Arithmetic*, an obscure essay compared to his influential 1598 *Palladis Tamia*. Scholars have failed to understand, however, that *God's Arithmetic* is the key to understanding *Palladis Tamia*.

Stritmatter's work is an extension of a 2009 article by Robert Detobel and K.C. Ligon, who first pointed out textual discrepancies in *Palladis Tamia*. Stritmatter confirms that the book was strongly influenced by numerical concepts, being "constructed on a numerical scaffolding." Meres, Stritmatter showed, believed that mathematics was the entrance to all other higher arts and learning. Following up on the work of Detobel and Ligon, Stritmatter

(*Concordia, cont. from p. 19*)

argued that *Palladis Tamia* is organized in a classical structure and a numerical pattern that reflects Meres' theme that "two is better than one."

Every paragraph observes symmetry; the numbers in each category are designed to match an equal number of English and classical or continental writers, except for the paragraph including both "Shakespeare" and "Edward, Earl of



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Oxford," as Detobel and Ligon observed. They concluded that the English list must contain an extra name, and postulated that it is "Shakespeare." Extending the work of Detobel and Ligon, Stritmatter analyzed the specific order of names in the passage and determined that Shakespeare is paired with the obscure Greek comedian Aristonymous (literally, aristocratic name).

According to Stritmatter, Meres' method reveals that not only was there

an intended discrepancy of count on the English side of Meres' equation (leading one to guess that the two redundant names were Shakespeare and Oxford), but actually specifies that the names requiring union (as denoting essentially the same man) were those "Shakespeare" and "Edward, Earl of Oxford." This is communicated by means of a clever triangulation involving both location and meaning. By position, the marker "Aristonymous" (the aristocratic name) is connected to "Shakespeare" (they are respectively seventh in each of Meres' lists). Semantically, however, Aristonymous is related to Oxford – the only "aristocratic name" on the English side.

### Going to Misprison

In his talk "Unveiling the Sonnets," long-time Oxfordian Bill Boyle revisited three sonnets in support of Hank Whittemore's *Monument* theory. Boyle said it is necessary to know "who's who" -- to correctly identify the Fair Youth, the Dark Lady and the historical context of the poems, and whether they tell a single story. If Southampton is the fair youth, does "trespass" in sonnets 35 and 120 refer to an actual crime, i.e., Southampton's treason conviction?

Boyle suggested that the reference to "misprison" in sonnet 87 tells us that the Queen (who had authority to reduce a treason conviction to one for misprison of treason) acted to spare Southampton's life. The historical context must be considered. He concluded that the Sonnets "are real and grounded in real history, a history that must include the Essex Rebellion."

### Language, Structure, and Story

Author Hank Whittemore then turned to the subject, "The Road to the Monument of the Sonnets – and the Clearly-Marked Signposts along the Way." He stated that the 154 Sonnets have a carefully arranged sequence of language, structure, and story. Sonnets 1-17 reflect a last ditch effort to persuade Henry Wriothesley, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Southampton to marry; Sonnets 18-26 correspond to the years 1592-1600, and Sonnets 27-126 reflect the time that Southampton was imprisoned in the Tower.

Whittemore stressed that any Stratfordian claim that the Sonnets lack relation to real situations is wrong.

Whittemore noted that in her newly released book, *Shakespeare Suppressed*, Katherine Chiljan also finds that Oxford wrote the Sonnets to save Southampton from execution. Chiljan agrees that Oxford made a deal with Robert Cecil to spare Southampton's life, and had to forfeit his identity and help James to secure the



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throne of England. In return, the new monarch released Southampton and restored his lands and property. In Chiljan's view, Southampton, with the aid of Thomas Thorpe, published the Sonnets in 1609. According to Whittemore, Chiljan supports the main conclusions of his book, *The Monument*.

### Cradles of Sin

Sam Saunders, Professor of Mathematics at Washington State University, spoke on the topic, "The Elevation of Guileless, the Gullible, the Guileless, and the


Guilty?" His theme was Shakespeare: how did it happen? Professor Saunders stated that in the 1600s, the Puritans thought plays were "full of vice and cradles of sin." As a consequence all English theaters were closed in 1642. Gradually, however, after 1660, a few plays were produced and, in 1709, Nicholas Rowe published the complete works of William Shakespeare, the first affordable collection of plays.

In 1733, Lewis Theobald published a seven-volume annotated version of Shakespeare's work and was considered the preeminent Shakespeare scholar of the time. In 1765, Samuel Johnson and his friend, actor David Garrick, published another seven-volume edition, but criticized all former editions. Garrick also played Richard III in 1741, a performance which rejected the bombastic acting style of the time and replaced it with a calmer, more natural style; some complained that his style went too far and that he was "overly fond of extravagant attitudes...convulsive twitching, the caricatures of gesture, and unnatural pauses in the middle of a sentence. Saunders ended his talk by saying that "the Guileless" was Samuel Johnson, "the Guilty" was David Garrick, and "the gullible" are the people.


### To Be or Not to Be Authentic

Dr. Daniel Wright spoke about MS 294, a document in the library of Edwin Durning-Lawrence in the University of London, but which does not appear in the inventory of the library. The manuscript was a lecture delivered to the Ipswich Philosophic Society in 1805, written by James Corton Cowell and first made public in 1932. Based on the findings of Francis Wilmot, the document is the first public claim that William Shakespeare was a fraud. An 18<sup>th</sup> century clergyman, James Wilmot's five-year study of local history in the Stratford area convinced him that Shakespeare could not have authored the works attributed to him and identified Bacon as the true author.

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**The authenticity of Cowell's "Reflections" was accepted by Shakespearean scholars for many years, but was challenged in 2002-03 by Dr. John Rollett, Dr. Daniel Wright, and Professor Alan H. Nelson. Rollett could find no historical traces of either Cowell, the Ipswich Philosophic Society, or its supposed president, Arthur Cobbold. Wright, Nelson and Rollett examined the document and noticed that there were odd tears in the paper, and that it was not written on the kind of paper one would used at the time. Unfortunately, the library will not allow the paper to be tested. Wright suggested that a Bacon supporter may have forged the manuscript and added it to Durning-Lawrence's archives to revive Bacon's flagging popularity in the face of the Earl of Oxford's challenge. He asserted that they could not validate the document, and that the lack of corrections might indicate it was not the original. He did say, however, that the document indeed might be authentic since the binding seemed to be genuine.**



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### A Dunn Deal

In a lighthearted vein, the conference received a surprise visit from none other than Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who temporarily "borrowed" the body of well-known Shakespearean actor and Fellowship member Michael Dunn. Dunn gave a rousing performance of his one-man play, *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Sonneteer*. Looking for the true identity of a Mr. William Shakespeare, Holmes remarked, "It seems to me that a careful examination of the room and the lawn might possibly reveal some traces of this mysterious individual." When he found the William Shakespeare he was looking for, a certain Mr. Edward de Vere, someone from the audience shouted "Excellent!" to which Mr. Holmes replied, "Elementary, my good friend." On that high note, the 15<sup>th</sup> annual SASC adjourned for another year.

## Two Years after *Contested Will* or, How are the Stratfordians Doing?

by William Ray

**J**ames Shapiro, while knowledgeable about the plays and studies of Shakespeare, is not an original thinker. I introduce in evidence a quotation from Jonathan Bate: “There is a mystery about the identity of William Shakespeare. The mystery is this: why should anyone doubt that he was William Shakespeare, the author from Stratford-upon-Avon?” In short, there is only one problem, anybody who says there is a problem.

Shapiro’s adaptation of Bate’s load-up for trouble-making bear is Upper West-Side gentility: “My interest...is not in what people think [about the Shakespeare authorship]...so much as why they think it.” Now, people commonly think about such an inquiry in terms of theories. Since Shapiro concerns himself with the people, not their theories, he also denies there is a significant problem with the present understanding of the identity of Shakespeare. The people are the problem.

We know immediately that the main subject of the controversy—was the author Shakespeare a person and if so who—will not be in the foreground of *Contested Will*. Like the defense lawyer to the jury, he wishes only to cast doubt on questioners’ credibility and to minimize their standing to speak. Shapiro will dig behind the words and lives of contrarian Shakespearean readers for diseased roots of their contrary beliefs. *Ad*, not *cum*, *hominem*, is on the table.

Shapiro gives the impression he thought of everything in the book, but he dissembles. *Contested Will* appropriates ideas and attitudes from all over the Shakespeare field, nor just Bate’s denial of trouble. It is a Reader’s Digest of Stratfordian doctrine. As William S. Niederkorn wrote, the acknowledgment section reads like the industry’s Politburo. There is no index. Authors get credited unspecifically

and after the fact in the rambling bibliographical essay, so that the reader if he reads the chapter at all learns that the text contained few of Shapiro’s thoughts. All was conveyed chattily as though he were lounging with the reader armchair by armchair in the club. *Another cigar? Where was I?*

Shapiro sees problems on both sides of the authorship struggle. By a stroke of good fortune, he is dead center. His amiable bonhomie says relax, it will all be fine; I will tell you what to think.



**This is a book of profound pretension and patronization. Leave it to the experts, one in particular. Shapiro will by the end betray any trust cultivated earlier on. Experts defend their territory before they take the time to decide whether they inhabit worthy ground. Shapiro spent two years in the vineyards of wrath instead.**



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Monographs on why people believe what they do ordinarily come out of the sociology or psychology departments,

not from a Columbia University English department professor. Right at the start, Shapiro abandons the commitment of his professional field, i.e., to contribute unbiased knowledge of Shakespeare through solitary study and reflection, tested by peer review. He has embarked on writing biographical criticism on biographical critics, the analysis of whose inner motivations in which he was not credentialed. The personalities involved in Oxfordian scholarship have found cause to challenge on factual grounds who wrote Shakespeare, which threatens his guild, his world-view, and his personal reputation. Specifically that challenge is that Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, not the hapless Shakspeare, wrote the works of Shakespeare. The Stratford Shakespeare was a hoax perpetuated over time until it has become customary truth.

The Marlowe and Bacon chapters in the book are like filler in the bread-dough, a means to imply they’re all alike aren’t they, scarecrows tilting together, headpieces stuffed with straw. In general, no one really believes Marlowe or Bacon, or any of dozens of others, wrote Shakespeare. There isn’t sufficient evidence to think so, and it is unlikely that there ever will be. The specter of Oxford presents the only active danger to the Stratfordian establishment, its belief system, its status, its proxy pride, and the bottom line, its yearly profit.

Shapiro is nice with the stiletto. He talks saccharine sweet the while. He takes the late night TV show host route to literary inquiry. His friendly advice, whether in the pages of the book or in orchestrated book tour format, turns out to be, close yourself to the life of the writer, that doesn’t matter, just watch the plays. That is your best bet--and his. Why, because the Stratford Shakespeare—Shakspeare—HAD no life relevant to ‘his work’ so far as we know him and it; and saying otherwise is



just insulting and shallow poor form! The fount of his art was Imagination! None else necessary! The argument is no more complicated than that.

This is as stunted a reduction of creativity to dreamy-time scribbling as I have ever read. Contrast it with our usual human sympathy for our artists and au-



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thors because they paid for their wisdom with the wages of experience. But not Shakespeare. Didn't have to. The critical methodology of comparing writer experience to written work is verboten there. If we were speaking only of modern writers I

sense that Shapiro would take what there is from their souls and believe it personal and authentic. But he makes an arbitrary exception in a single case, Shakespeare's evocative conveyance of feeling, mood, atmosphere, and the social frame. In his writing only, Shapiro advises us, there is no personal information to take. Rather, you are presumptuous and factually errant to think there might be. Silly gooses.

His assertion about Shakespeare's all-achieving imagination, an expansion of which idea would makes biographical study since the Enlightenment irrelevant, follows a familiar pattern in historical Shakespeare criticism. The initial Bardolatry was the Divine Shakespeare, next to God in his omniscient insight, since no one knew anything of him. Then it was Shakespeare the Genius, the demi-god standing all alone, *sui generis*, the Colossus. T.S. Eliot, one of the Western tradition's most astute critics, intoned, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the world between them; there is no third." He said of the Sonnets: "This autobiography is written by a foreign man in a foreign tongue, which can never be translated." He was honest enough to say we knew nothing of his life. In the world according to Shapiro, however, it is Shakespeare's Imagination which makes him qualitatively different from human stuff. Autobiography is superfluous. Why is there even a fuss?

Shapiro goes further in his exposition, as though sensing the point may not have been totally persuasive. He explicitly denies any personal, autobiographical involvement anywhere in the literature of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. This goes out on a new limb of the literary tree. His argument relies upon viewing Western literary progress backward. It also depends on a few convenient monographs with definitions of autobiography limited to the subset of the confessional text.

He starts with 20<sup>th</sup> century literature, themes of existential alienation, borne through experience via an individualist perspective. That derived in part from the 19<sup>th</sup> century's focus on the romantic and picaresque hero, a la Byron and Whitman, individualism writ vast not small. In turn, individualism had harbingers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, such as Defoe, Gray, Goldsmith,

Johnson, Burns, and Wordsworth. But Shapiro asserts there was none of it earlier on. The later literary trends developed ad hoc.



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A work of criticism that established the literary concept of individual consciousness in the 18<sup>th</sup> century would be a revolutionary contribution to knowledge. But Shapiro's idea is more rationalization than concept. Saying individual thought and experience had no part before 1700 goes against our understanding of how literary form occurs. Granted there was a hiatus in plays during the English Civil

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(Contested Will, cont. from p. 25)

Wars (1640-1649), but wasn't there at least *some* literature during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, *some* of whose elements which led on to the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>?

Shapiro believes Shakespeare appeared *sui generis*. Perhaps he sincerely believes autobiographical influence upon the springs of creativity appeared the same way, after, perhaps, but not before Shakespeare died. Literary movements do not rise from a vacuum. Are we to accept that during his time or before he was born, there was no autobiographical impact on art? Did Chaucer use any material from his experience? Boccaccio? Michelangelo? Rabelais? Romano? Erasmus? Tintorini? Dante? Chapman, Jonson, Sidney? It seems they did, as is well known.

Shapiro might have an engaging scholarly argument if he had limited his theory to the devices of Tudor literature—that



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**What is with the bamboozle?**



it was patently bad form to hang Philip Rothian laundry on the public clothesline. Allegory and indirection were more appropriate literary devices to the mores of the Tudor era. What is Shapiro up to here? To contend with a straight face that there were *no* autobiographical features in Elizabethan written art, neither in plays nor poetry, is to ignore recognizable personal data in the works of Chapman, Dekker, Raleigh, Hatton, Jonson, Spenser, Marlowe, Vaux, Sidney, Surrey, and Wyatt. According to Richard Whalen in an early Shapiro review, such scholars as David Riggs, Edward Berry, and Marchette Chute differed with Shapiro, demonstrating that personal touches of autobiography were part and parcel of literature in the Elizabethan and Jacobean reigns. The competitive aspects of the feudal contest transferred into the literary genres, making for puns, innuendo, allegory, and mythologizing. It was a matter of no slight decorous honor to do so. Jonson killed a

competitor in a duel and skewered others by the quill.

With his non sequitur that Elizabethan writers only wrote writings divorced from their own experience, Shapiro supplies reasons to believe that he is not credible, that he is prevaricating for some reason, that he has developed the professional scholar's psychological tic, selective denial. Given the amount of factual information disproving his position, we are forced to guess at Shapiro's motive in presenting such an outlandish claim to his generally uninformed and trusting readers. What is with the bamboozle? Why take such a dubious position? Is it not to pre-emptively wall the readers from the quite logical conclusion that *there is no correspondence whatsoever* between the life of Shakspeare of Stratford and the magisterial, aristocratic, classically trained rhetoric and lyric grace of the Shakespeare canon? Shapiro betrays the reader's trust that he will faithfully represent the truth. It's his way or the highway.

What function did autobiography play in the authorship of the Shakespeare canon? This is a legitimate question. Shapiro scoffs at it. He says that with 1,300 characters, you can find similarities to about anyone. He seems to have missed several decades of scholarship. Specific characteristics and deeds of specific people are indeed identifiable in the works of Shakespeare, and there is a long tradition of doing it. As for seeking the face behind the mask of authorship, we can make informed deductions there, too, and we must if we aim to find some unity of creative mind and created art.

Hugh Trevor-Roper, no crackpot he, laid out very reasonable means of getting a purchase on the character if not the identity of the Shakespeare author. First, his conscious knowledge and thought as shown in the plays. This tells us what is in his mind. Second, his underlying assumptions about what is taken for granted. This would reflect to some extent his philosophy. The caste quality of the plays for instance, the aristocratic monopoly on transcendent heroism. Third, what is the world, the frame from which he draws customary images?

Many years ago Spurgeon admirably described the images of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Bacon. With Shakespeare she listed images from earthly nature, the weather, plants, garden and gardening, animals, especially birds, the body and its condition, domestic features of fire, light, food, cooking, the expansive world of hunting, or of warfare, the mysterious realm of medicine and herbs. Acceptable deductions from these images go quite a way toward identifying and understanding the author's inner being. We may not arbitrarily and foolishly bind play character to historical person, or work to author. But according to Shapiro's dictum, we must ignore all obvious parallels always and everywhere. And this in turn ignores the social frame and the artist's audience, to whom context and reference are evocative of much meaning to be gained in the cultural experience of art.

The creation of rather flimsy ad hoc theories in defense of an ulterior, in my view ideological, motive tells us that he, the intransigently faithful Stratfordian English professor, is behind the barricades protecting his turf. Propounding the taboo against even the thought of any other author possibility than Stratford Shakspeare is critical to his book and his occupational equipoise.

At one point he does reason rationally, that we don't know enough about "Shakespeare's personal history to draw reliable conclusions about autobiographical effects on the plays and poems." This is quite true in a sense, but he misses the point that he may have hung his bet on the wrong guy, and this is why nothing at all fits. He is reasonable only after cordoning off the larger question. Does the same no-autobiography analysis hold for Oxford? He vacates the field on that issue. Since autobiography is out, Shapiro



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doesn't face that battle, except to scoff that being attacked by pirates doesn't prove Oxford wrote *Hamlet*. And this is so hugely reductionist of an enormous body of circumstantial evidence that we know he is not walking away. He is running.

I agree we don't know much about Shakspeare, beyond that he couldn't sign his name and he wasn't interested in anything but material gain. That available knowledge is sufficient to damage the contention that Shakspeare wrote anything, never mind the most considerable body of work in English. The same does not go for Oxford as Shakespeare.

Circumstantial evidence combined with a progressively documented trail of identity intrigue are leading us to the surprising thought that the straw man keeps getting stronger and stronger. If there were any pebble of an autobiographical structure that supported Shakspeare of Stratford, we have no doubt it would be exploited into a tower. Stratfordian theory is selective and opportunistic. It is not above playing dirty, because the Oxfordian challenge has stirred the emotions associated with us or them survival.

Ordinarily a lopsided evidentiary comparison ought to conclude the discussion. Shakspeare couldn't write and left nothing literary. But legend is impermeable to logic and fact. Loyalty to one's forebears, right or wrong, does not reverse on cue. It does not matter that Shapiro has no evidence to stand behind his primary assumption, that the Stratfordian Shakspeare was behind the stage name Shakespeare. In the realm of the emotions, the similar name quickly closes the case, and that seems to have happened as far as Shapiro is concerned. Too close not to be true. Occam's razor. Don't cause trouble. This is an argument that accepts that fact may be manufactured over time from legend and have its own claim to veracity. It ignores a body of evidence that establishes anonymity and pseudonymity as aspects of political theater in the Elizabethan-Cecilian tyranny—that Shakespeare was an obvious and politically defiant moniker.

Instead Shapiro's reasoning recirculates authority from the legend (that Stratford Shakspeare was the same man as the author Shakespeare) to the unfounded assertion that Shakspeare surely had all the qualities of a Shakespeare. He had to have. It is this simple but crucial error in connective logic that promises to make the Shakespeare establishment lose face. Presumptive circularity is no basis for literary proof.

In faith there is no questioning. We find that Shapiro in *Contested Will* never asks the humble scholar's question, the obvious question, what is the rest of the story? Legendary background isn't enough. Rationalizations aren't enough. The historical 'Shakespeare' as presently propounded, i.e., up from Warwickshire obscurity, resembled no, and for all rec-

ognizable intents and purposes was no, writer at all.

Shapiro has committed the centuries-long gaffe, touting the big lie somebody respectable told him, giving him license to assert as natural and true what is properly customary truth. Customary truth is perpetuated mythology multiplied by generations and endorsed as fact. The legendary Shakespeare paradigm has embodied inherited emotion we carry even now as loyalty to the country boy who overcame all and became a, no, the,



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spiritual prince.

But scholars are committed to question custom loosely asserted as knowledge. They ask, is this true, and seek the backing that assures it is or is not. Since Shapiro fails to fundamentally inquire, the inherited ignorance from the past mixes in equal measure with self-important professoriality. We get from this awkward weave, a damaged fabric of language, embroidered with unseemly pretense and presumption. It leads to, like Ptolemy's cosmology or Lenin's communism, a sterile methodology, that refuses further information but

(Continued on p. 28)

*(Contested Will cont. from p. 27)*

instead resorts to the trappings of authority and tradition for its poor copy of authenticity. I discuss the symptomatic pretentious and presumptuous language below.

Shapiro finds many ways to say how hard it is to be right. He says, "Hardly a year goes by without a scandal of a writer" turning fiction into memoir to sell books. He quotes someone writing, "It is hardly possible that an autobiographical edge to the plot was not on his mind." He states, "It's hard not to assume literary works are inescapably autobiographical." He laments with crocodile tears dripping that "this sour portrayal of married life makes it difficult for Greenblatt" not to read Shakespeare's surely unhappy life out of the canon's rocky marriages. He feels "It's not easy to break the misconception" of the nuclear family being primary through history, and also feels "It's not easy to determine how many autobiographies were being written" in the early 1900s. In contrast, "It's hard to avoid" concluding that (Oxfordian?) autobiographical details allegedly included in the plays "are like Baconian ciphers."

"It's hard to avoid concluding that Freud's decision to embrace the Oxfordian cause was, at best, self-deceiving." And that's at best, for the giant of psychological literature, as evaluated by James Shapiro, PhD in English lit. Further reservations about Freud: "It may be unfair on my part, [isn't it the scholar's duty to be fair?] but I cannot help but feel that Freud, who professed himself to be Looney's 'follower' seems to have turned a blind eye to the broader implications of what Looney advocated." Shapiro had characterized Looney as a Nazi-manque because he was an English Positivist and then implicated Freud as a dupe for believing the modest schoolmaster's hypothesis of Oxford as 'Shakespeare'. In Shapiro's judgment, "A theory so deeply rooted... makes it hard...", and so on and on.

He confides to the omniscient reader that "It's not easy keeping track of all the candidates promoted as the true [Shakespeare canon] author." In order to bring 'Shakespeare's works marginally closer to the capabilities of a money-lender, he advises, "The myth that Shakespeare had the largest vocabulary of any English writer is hard to dispel." Finally, writing of Shakespeare's great gift of imagination,

he opines, "It's hard to imagine a better definition of the mystery of literature" than Theseus' line in *Midsummer Night's Dream* that "the poet's pen that gives airy nothing a habitation and a name."

First of all, the mystery of literature, whatever that may be in the author's mind, is not subject to 'better definitions' or it wouldn't be a mystery. He may have meant "It's hard to imagine a more enchanting example of the lyrical evanescence that



**Instead of declarative sentences whose power derives from the integrity of fertile inquiry, Shapiro's grammar insinuates itself around our ankles. "It's hard this" and "it's hard that" subtextually invites us to join him in faux-amiably looking off the ends of our noses at the object of his criticisms. No curses, just sniffs. A writer who deals in euphemisms thinks he can get by without the responsibility of being frank and bearing the consequences.**



is literature." As it is, the words mean, they do, nothing. What are we reading here actually? I believe it is writing that is empty of deep conviction. I heard that Shapiro got the short straw and took on the task of putting down the Oxfordian interpretation of Shakespeare's genesis. Perhaps he resented devoting two years of his life to such a task. The results show.

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"Those who," like "it's hard to," is another sly directive cue for the reader to line up on Shapiro's side of doctrinal conformity. The abstract "those who" clearly can't be "us." "We" aren't like "them." "We" are good. "They" are different from us, therefore not good, but we don't have to say so. We're too good for that. Shades of the oratorical exordium's penultimate putdown. The locution began with Ronald Reagan's speechwriters, who used coded phrasing to construct the propaganda of politically expedient social division and its bastard mass phenomenon, demonography, the creation of scapegoats. People in the lonely crowd will tend not to express or even think something if it is emphatically not socially safe.

As an indication of how mediocre the standards of academic prose have become in following this ideological level of discourse, we discover habitual subtextual—invariably negative—messaging in Shapiro's syntax. There are "those who view," and "those who believe," and "those who don't believe," and "those who doubted," and "It's odd that those who think....". The book is full of flaccid snark words.

A last example of verbal idiosyncrasy betraying Shapiro's colors is the presumptuous employment of phrases beginning with "for." He repeatedly imputes his version of his targets' statements onto their names by pre-setting the phrase "for Twain," "for Weis," "again for Weis," "for Niederkorn," "for Ernest Jones," "for J.T. Looney," "for Gay." No quotations are referenced to bolster the self-serving summations, which have little to do with what anyone really said or meant and are usually stretched to a malformed extreme. The inferences and conclusions are Shapiro's alone, for his purposes alone, chosen and adjusted regardless of fidelity to original intent or expression. I consider this a species of cheating, to mask opinion from getting shown up as a professional faux pas. "To speak of artistic legacy was inevi-

tably for Twain to invoke the one writer [Shakespeare] whose reputation had never flagged." Did "Twain" consistently say or do this, or did Shapiro just gratuitously tack on Samuel Clemens's pseudonym, neglecting to broach that "Shakespeare/Shake-speare" gave every indication of



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being another pseudonym? O woeful day. Get thee behind me Satan.

Parenthetically, on the subject of scholarly imprecision and disrespect, it should get in the record somewhere that in the passages assassinating Freud's character, Shapiro repeatedly misspelled the name of Freud's confidant, Fliess, as Fleiss. Fliess is a well-known name in psychologi-

cal literature. Further, Shapiro erred in calling the *Venus and Adonis* or *Lucrece* dedicatory epistle a "dedicatory letter," indicating unfamiliarity with Shakespearean analysis. It wasn't any kind of letter, which is a signed correspondence. Moving from mere inexcusable error to academic outrage, Shapiro arrogated to himself a discovery about the Wilmot-Cowell hoax, actually revealed by Dr. John Rollett. Shapiro read of Rollett's research, then waited until just before publication and seeing no Oxfordian announcement in print, wrote the book's "prologue" imagining himself as the hero of the Wilmot-Cowell revelation.: "And then my heart skipped as I came upon the following words..."

This is plagiaristic fraud. Shapiro would have had no idea that the forgery contained anachronisms, unless he had read in an Oxfordian publication that Rollett proved it was a fraud. To buttress this surmise, Shapiro does not explain that, if the discovery had actually been his, why he did not publish and become a world-famous hero of the truth? Disingenuously he did not even put Rollett's name in the bibliographical essay, just the Concordia University professor, Daniel Wright, who reported Rollett's research. Oxfordians did and do not have the money to verify and fully study even so major a discovery as fraudulent Shakespeare sources. Shapiro knew he could glean the pickings and if the Oxfordians complained, no one would listen.

His declared research is a scholastic embarrassment. The "hyphen" argument, in the second chapter entitled Shakespeare, before the denouement, seeks to marginalize the frequent and pseudonym-confirming hyphen in Shake-speare as a printer's expedient. He got nothing right about it, not even where the hyphenated name first occurred. He asserted the hyphenated and italicized Shake-speare cognomen occurred with the publication of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, in 1593-4. It didn't. He stated the author subscriptions were in italics. They weren't. End of hyphen in the author name Shake-speare as a printer's expedient. Those works in fact displayed the author designation in Roman type as "William Shakespeare." The spelling "Shakespeare" incidentally was a form William Shakspeare of Stratford never used

until 1596 according to available evidence, that is, not until after the Shakespeare name had become nationally famous.



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Shapiro had appropriated the hyphen concept from Gary Taylor without saying so in the chapter. He, like Greenblatt

(Continued on p. 30)

(*Contested Will cont. from p. 29*)

and Bate, has serious problems with scholastic honesty. [I have discussed Greenblatt's copycatting in *Will in the World* (*Shakespeare-Oxford Newsletter* September 2009). In "Who is Shakespeare? What is He?" Bate devoted the last several pages of a discussion of the Shakespeare authorship issue to a rant that included no facts, inconceivable behavior for a professional academic.]

To sum up, much of what Shapiro says in *Contested Will* is fiction, or to use the



**Shapiro conceived the following paragraph to explain that people were fundamentally different back then: "The degree of personal privacy and hygiene we enjoy today would have been foreign to Shakespeare and his contemporaries, who shared rooms and even beds, and lived at a time when the use of objects such as the fork, the handkerchief, and the nightdress were only beginning to become widespread." ...Never did I anticipate that Tudor nightgowns being or not being widespread would figure into the resolution of the authorship of the Shakespeare canon.**



more polite term in the guild, conjecture. He says that no one in England could have owned as many books as are referenced in the works of Shakespeare. He says that Shakspeare browsed the London bookstalls to read them. He says that Shakspeare was one of the most familiar faces in London or at court. He says that he had been at court hundreds of times. He says that he showed little interest in how his plays were

published but took care with his poetry. He says that his profitability was such that it was worth it to finally put his name on play title pages in 1598. (But not on the half dozen that were hits in the previous five years?)

Shapiro conceived the following paragraph to explain that people were fundamentally different back then: "The degree of personal privacy and hygiene we enjoy today would have been foreign to Shakespeare and his contemporaries, who shared rooms and even beds, and lived at a time when the use of objects such as the fork, the handkerchief, and the nightdress were only beginning to become widespread." In studying this issue over a number of years, never did I anticipate that Tudor nightgowns being or not being widespread would figure into the resolution of the authorship of the Shakespeare canon.

No evidence exists to support this drivel. It is weak self-serving speculation. Selective, factually loose, sloppy, morally shabby, slyly coercive uses of language by any writer regrettably tells that he has profaned his native tongue's sanctity as an instrument of truth. The corruption is not just with language, though that is a sorrow. It is not good for scholars to attend wealthy cocktail parties, move in the higher atmospheres of power, or bear abroad the public image of sanctimonious piety in lecture halls that are presumed to be holy secular churches of culture. Scholarship is not religion. Scholars must not be faux-priests.

Beyond the ethical impropriety of ransacking other people's work to suit oneself, violations a conscientious writer does not permit himself, Shapiro has demonstrated that in the end he isn't really after gaining or conveying information. In the former matter, gaining information, he doesn't need to know more. His version of the evidence says he's right. It is the other guy who is off in the head. In the second, conveying information, he has eschewed presenting in *Contested Will* the required findings of fact, but rather publishes his own concoction of distracted views concerning a putatively reprehensible but so far unsuccessfully quashed threat to orderly Shakespearean study.

We know how *Contested Will* came

about, that is, from what motivations. Shapiro candidly expressed himself on them, to the Shakespeare Guild in New York: "I wrote it to shut them up once and for all" and to "show how they don't know how to evaluate evidence." Like the tardy bromides of 20<sup>th</sup> century American Southern segregation, Shapiro's patronizing manner and self-lamed reactionary book are symptomatic of the Stratfordians' increasingly malignant doctrine.



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William J. Ray retired as a rural carrier in 2001. His friends created a website for him, wjray.net.

It contains his selected poetry and essays, including the growing section called Shakespeare Papers. Prior to settling his family in rural Willits California, he was a student at the University of California, Berkeley from 1962-68.

*(Treason, cont. from p. 15)*

- <sup>25</sup> Ted Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*. Faber & Faber. London 1992.
- <sup>26</sup> Friedrich Hiebel, *Das Drama des Dramas*. Dornach 1984. 56-61.
- <sup>27</sup> Richard Ramsbotham, *Who wrote Bacon?* Temple Lodge. London 2004. The author – to whom I am indebted for many insights – mentions my first article in a footnote to his Afterword to the Germ. tr. (Jakob I. Perseus Verlag. Basel 2008). Unfortunately, his brief reply to Oxfordian contentions betrays the customary misinformation. He scorns the idea of an educated nobleman replacing the inspired country person of what is called the conventional, Stratfordian view. One notices the country-person view is at odds in the list: King David, Homer, Dante, Goethe. Ramsbotham, in my opinion, also misapplies the important insights of conspiracy theory concerning a Western ruling élite. Despite its 400 years standing, the onus is on those who hold what is called the conventional view to answer the informed contention that the conventional view originated in a political conspiracy.
- <sup>28</sup> R. Steiner, *The Karma of Untruthfulness*. Vol. 2. GA 174. Rudolf Steiner Press. London 1992. 131.
- <sup>29</sup> Hughes 1992. 101-116, also note 431f. Jaques le Grand is only mentioned by name (*As You Like It*. III. iv. 4 and III. v. 35, also 95 “great Saint Jaques”). Hughes also connects to St Jaques le Grand, alias St Iago of Compostella, Spain. However, the play is partly set in Florence, near which is situated the church of San Giacorno d’Altopasis.
- <sup>30</sup> Cardinal Richelieu in Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s play *Richelieu; or the Conspiracy* (1839).
- <sup>31</sup> Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton Univ. Press 1957. Penguin Books 1990. Summarized: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatomy\\_of\\_Criticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatomy_of_Criticism). Germ. tr. Analyse der Literaturkritik. Kohlhammer. Stuttgart 1964.
- <sup>32</sup> Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. Routledge. London 1972. Ark edition 1986. Routledge Classics 2001. Germ. tr.: Aufklärung in Zeichen des Rosenkreuzes. 1997. See also n. 3.
- <sup>33</sup> Coleridge: *Poems and Prose*. Penguin Books. Harmondsworth 1957. 240. Also ‘old’ Everyman edition, Coleridge’s Essays & Lectures on

Shakespeare... Dent, London; Duddon, New York. ND. 47. Coleridge lectured in 1818: “... our own Shakespeare—himself a nature humanized, a genial understanding directing self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper even than our consciousness” (ibid).

- <sup>34</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*. Tr. Alan Stott. Anastasi Ltd. Weobley 2005. Lecture, Dornach 24 June 1924. GA 279. Germ. ed. 50. ET. 33.

- <sup>35</sup> Helga Thoene, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Ciaconna Tanz oder Tombeau?* Dr Ziethen Verlag. Oschersleben 2003. [www.helga-thoene.de](http://www.helga-thoene.de). On the instrumental cycles of the last 12 years, see Hertha Kluge-Kahn, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Die verschlüsselten theologischen Aussagen in seinem Spätwerk*. Möseler. Wolfbüttel u. Zürich 1985.

*(Anonymous Statement, cont. from p. 6)*

understanding of the author’s need for anonymity.

Such succession narratives have existed for decades and scholarly inquiry is still proceeding. With this in mind, we do not prematurely endorse nor condemn conclusions merely because of their potentially controversial nature. Rather, we trust in the spirit of open inquiry and rigorous scholarship to eventually shed greater light. The Shakespeare Fellowship sponsors conferences and publications that will continue to be open forums for advocates for the Earl of Oxford on either side of this issue.

The fundamental case for the 17th Earl of Oxford as the true author of the Shakespeare canon is rapidly gaining support. To learn more about the authorship question and the case for Oxford, visit the *Shakespeare Fellowship* and *Brief Chronicles* websites.

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(Anonymous, cont. from p. 3)

panel discussion, Mark Anderson noted that the film had originally been set to premiere in the spring of 2011 (a season when less important films are generally released), but was rescheduled by Sony to the fall in order to attract as wide an audience as possible and possibly some Oscar nominations. The film has a large advertising campaign, complete with television ads and billboards.

Advance reviews have generally been very favorable. Writing in *The Hollywood Reporter* (an influential trade publication), Kirk Honeycutt characterized the film as “all historical rubbish,” but “glorious fun.” He found it “surprisingly . . . Emmerich’s best film,” noting that the director “steers a coherent path through a complex bit of Tudor history while establishing a highly credible atmosphere of paranoia and intrigue.” In *Boxoffice Magazine*, Amy Nicholson wrote that the “need to entertain comes at the expense of the facts – a good thing because it means popcorn movie fans will eat up *Anonymous* more than will English grad students.” She called it “great pop, a slippery pseudo-historical soap opera that’s a delight to watch.”

Damon Wise, reviewing for *The Guardian*, found *Anonymous* “shocking only in that it is rather good,” and called it a “cluttered but sincere film.” In *Movieline*, Stephanie Zacharek observed that

the film “suggests—in a highly unbelievable fashion” that Edward de Vere, “a minor Elizabethan poet,” is Shakespeare, and finds that “Emmerich treats the possibility solemnly.”

Robert Koehler, reviewing the film for *Variety*, presciently predicts that the “Pic is likely to encounter commercial headwinds faced by any historical movie, but may get a lift from press accounts of inevitable controversy when classicists and others protest.” Finding it “primarily a writer’s film,” Koehler praised the performances of Mark Rylance (“superbly performing several roles on the Globe stage”), Vanessa Redgrave (“a deeply felt performance as an aged and vexed Queen Elizabeth” who “veritably glows in most of her scenes”) and Rhys Ifans (who “builds his performance on details”).

As Koehler accurately foresaw, not all reaction to the film has been positive. The self-appointed guardians of the Stratford status quo are, almost to a person, up in arms. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust put together “60 Minutes with Shakespeare,” gathering several dozen “experts” to answer sixty self-proposed questions purporting to reinforce the case for the Stratford man.

James Shapiro penned another screed, this one for the op-ed page of the *New York Times* on October 16, “Hollywood Dishonors the Bard.” Shapiro relies on the

usual shopworn arguments that “testimony of other contemporary writers [confirms] that Shakespeare wrote the works attributed to him” and that Oxford “died in 1604, before 10 or so of Shakespeare’s plays were written.” Shapiro frets that the “most troubling thing about *Anonymous* is [that] the film turns great plays into propaganda,” and concludes that “Why anyone is drawn to de Vere’s case is the real mystery. . . .” And the October 17 issue of *Newsweek* contains a rant from Simon Schama, in which he finds “something repellent at the heart of the [Oxfordian] theory . . . snobbery.” Schama goes on to assert that the six signatures in Shakespeare’s “own flowing hand” [his words, not ours!] prove that the Stratford man could write, and concludes that the film represents an “idiotic misunderstanding of history and the world of the theater but a fatal lack of imagination on the subject of the imagination.”

(Showerman, cont. from p. 2)

Trust over the inaccuracies in their recent on-line campaign, “60 Minutes with Shakespeare.” Clearly, the arguments over the authorship question and the legitimacy of Edward de Vere’s claim to being Shakespeare are going public!

Earl Showerman

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