



Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice
of the
Shakespeare
Fellowship"

Vol.2: no.2

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments..."

Winter 2003

Searching for Shakespeare

How the Sanders Portrait quest leads straight to authorship

While *Shakespeare Matters* has been publishing over the past year a series of articles on the Folger Shakespeare Library's handling of the famous Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare, another putative Shakespeare portrait has also been in the news, and last November at a conference in Toronto the two lines of portrait inquiry intersected, with some remarkable results.

About 150 scholars and Shakespeareans from North America and the United Kingdom attended the "Picturing Shakespeare" conference, including 10 members of the Shakespeare Fellowship. On the day after the Friday-Saturday conference Barbara Burris (author of the multi-part series published here) presented her findings on the Ashbourne. Fellowship members also distributed copies of *Shakespeare Matters* to many attendees and participated in the Q&A following several presentations.

While the conference had originally been called to study the provenance of the Sanders portrait (see *Shakespeare Matters*, Fall 2002), the presence of Folger Shakespeare Library Art Curator Erin Blake and the recent Folger decision to have the Ashbourne
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The artist as saint in Freed's Beard of Avon

By Sky Gilbert

For those who haven't seen it, Amy Freed's *The Beard of Avon* is not only a fascinating, well-researched, and entertaining play, but it also proves an instructive exploration of the sociological and philosophical implications of both the traditional Stratfordian and the radical Oxfordian paradigms.

The play (which opened in Toronto on November 18th) begins in a deceptively simple manner, and seems almost immediately to bode well for Oxfordians. The Stratfordian Will is presented as a country bumpkin with a screaming wife (Anne Hathaway, of course). As a storm rages outside the barn the hapless and stage-struck young man attempts to vent his emotion, but the poetic invective refuses to effuse. It quickly becomes clear that Stratford
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Fellowship in Cambridge

Conference brings together wide cross-section of Shakespeareans



Fellowship Trustee Alex McNeil had a busy week, first presenting a paper about writers and pseudonyms at the conference (see "What's in a 'Nym,?'" page 16), and then pleading Oxford's case in a Moot Court trial just two days later (see story, page 9).

The Shakespeare Fellowship's First Annual Conference was held over the weekend of October 18th to 20th at the Royal Sonesta Hotel on the Charles River in Cambridge, MA. It was a beautiful location, especially as the world-famous Charles River Regatta was also taking place, with many of the teams also staying at the hotel. On a few occasions conference attendees and regatta participants shared a few stories about their respective interests.

Events began on Friday afternoon as keynote speaker Richard Whalen led off by examining "The State of the Debate" and found it healthy in three arenas. Oxfordian scholars are researching, debating and publishing as never before in three quarterly newsletters and an annual journal, thanks to the Internet and computer-aided self-publishing. In the public arena, the major media, notably *The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Harper's*, have carried the debate to the general public and given it validity. In Whalen's view, the most significant development in recent years is the attention given to the debate in academia, notably Professor Dan Wright's Edward de Vere Studies Conference at Concordia University; Oxfordian studies at other universities, including the U.S. Air Force Academy; and the number of university professors now declared Oxfordians—about 25, compared to less than half a dozen five years ago. He added that leading Stratfordian professors, such as Alan Nelson, Steven May, Jonathan Bate and Marjorie Garber, are now actively engaged in the authorship controversy, although bravely holding to their Stratfordian faith.

Whalen, author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?*, argued that if
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Letters:

To the Editor:

I'm afraid that Robert Brazil's letter in the Fall 2002 issue may have left some readers with the impression that my article, "The Maiden and the Mermaid," either "borrowed without attribution" from Brazil's work, or appeared to do so, due to an admitted editorial error on our part.

An error was certainly made, and I appreciate the fact that you have apologized to Brazil for both of us, but I understand the net effect rather differently than Brazil. For most readers of *Shakespeare Matters*, it was rather as if I had mentioned the "Model A" or "Model 71" without mentioning the name of Henry Ford. Everyone knows these autos were produced by Henry Ford, and so, I suggest, most readers would have known that "The Thomas Creede Connection" which introduced most of us to the Creede emblem was written by Robert Brazil.

Similarly, I used the "Wounded Truth" description of the emblem in preference to the "Redeemed Maiden" description precisely because I assumed it to be of Brazil's coinage, and I was consciously basing the background material on the motto on Brazil's exposition.

As Robert now knows, but as *Shakespeare Matters* readers may not, "The Maiden and the Mermaid" was a lyrical introduction to a longer essay which summarizes Brazil's 1999 article on the early Shakespeare quartos published by Creede. In the full essay, Brazil's name is mentioned some 21 times, and the concluding paragraph clearly credits Antonia Fraser for all the background material regarding Mary, Queen of Scots, and Robert Brazil for all the background material regarding the Creede emblem and the quartos. The failure to conclude the abbreviated article with this same paragraph was a mechanical and technical problem and, in no way, an attempt to separate Robert from the credit he deserved.

However, the comparison I make of the Creede emblem with the pillow Mary embroidered for the Duke of Norfolk and its motto, as with the placard featuring Mary as a Mermaid which was posted up in Edinburgh after Darnley's murder, is entirely original, and I presume this is why the editors of *Shakespeare Matters*

chose to print it.

I believe my comparison of the mottoes and images is completely defensible and that it will prove useful to Oxfordians. Brazil's further research on the origins of the Creede emblem will be welcome, but I cannot imagine there will be anything which will invalidate my own exposition. My emphasis has not been on the origin of the emblem, but on the effect it was likely to have had on Oxford and Queen Elizabeth, recalling for both of them Mary, Queen of Scots, and the time of emotional turmoil for each of them which surrounded the trial and execution of the Duke of Norfolk.

Moreover, Brazil's correction of Fraser's "Vultus" as the third word of the motto on the Norfolk pillow is interesting in itself, and is leading to the uncovering of more items of interest, but it does nothing to invalidate the proposition set forth in "The Maiden and the Mermaid." It makes no difference whether the third word of the original motto is "Vultus" or "Virtus" since the parallelism between the two mottoes is contained in the first two words of each, "Viscerit Vulnere," which are identical.

That the third word of the motto becomes "Veritas" in the Creede motto is, by way of contrast, significant, since it suggests the direct or indirect influence of the Earl of Oxford, as I think Brazil and I have implied.

I do think Robert Brazil is being unfair or at least premature in assuming the appearance of "Vultus" in connection with the Norfolk pillow is due to a blunder on Fraser's part. It is a complex and rather odd word to be popping up in the motto for no apparent reason, and I suspect that the ultimate explanation will prove more interesting than mere myopia.

In the meantime, I thank *Shakespeare Matters* for the nice layout on "The Maiden and the Mermaid," and also for the apology to Robert Brazil which I was happy to confirm.

Carl Caruso
Weare, New Hampshire
29 November 2002

To the Editor:

Paul Streitz's letter (Fall 2002) about my review of his book *Oxford, Son of Queen Elizabeth I* (Summer 2002) misrepresents what he refers to as the two-year "rancorous debate" over the "ideas of [his] book" that took place on the Internet discussion group Phaeton. Despite the fact that he includes the Phaeton discussion in the Acknowledgements at the front of his book, Mr. Streitz wrote in his letter:

It became apparent that there was an

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship is to promote public awareness and acceptance of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), and further to encourage a high level of 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 501c(3) non-profit (Fed ID 04-3578550).

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Oxfordian faction that did not care what the facts were; they did not want any change in the gospel according to J. Thomas Looney. For them it was not that the PT Theory was not true, it was that it could not be true as a matter of either religious or political belief ... it was obvious that this faction neither could refute Oxford was the son of Elizabeth nor was willing to admit their lack of evidence. There was no more evidence to bring forth and hence I went on to write the book.

It's true that one upset participant in the discussion seemed to be led by his emotions, but speaking as one of only four partisans of the theory that Oxford may have been Elizabeth's son (the other three being Streitz, Hank Whittemore, and infrequent participant David Gontar), I can state unequivocally that the debate remained open-minded and examined fairly all of the evidence brought to bear. The end result, taking all the information that had been discussed under consideration, was that it was not possible Elizabeth Tudor had given birth to Edward de Vere.

Ironically, Mr. Streitz himself appeared to comprehend the logic of this conclusion. After he publicly libeled Phaeton in his letter, I find it entirely ethical to publish herein his post to that forum from October 30, 1999, under the subject header: Mother Elizabeth. [Ed. note: spelling has been corrected]:

Having had this exhaustive discussion of the Summer of 1548, I am concluding (others might not agree) that it is highly improbable that Elizabeth had a child in the summer of 1548. It is [not] impossible, but extremely unlikely.

As more facts are piled on the case we see "a number of coincidences we regard as remarkable," but I don't think we can get further than that.

What strikes me so, is that the Denny's would have to be the operatives to hide such an event, further [than] Elizabeth's tutor would. (Roger Ascham?) would also have to keep the secret. Given the politics of the time, I don't think this would be likely. The household at Cheshunt seems to be too busy and Elizabeth's actions to open to public scrutiny.

The coincidences of John de Vere and his marriage may just be remarkable coincidences.

Lacking new evidence, I am going to drop this line of inquiry. If anyone wants a collection of the posts on this subject, which are illuminating indeed, I will forward them to you, or just save them for

(Continued on page 4)

From the Editor

Who's afraid of the big, bad earl?

Over the years one consistent theme has run through the authorship debate, or at least the Oxfordian branch of it. And that is the notion that Edward de Vere cannot be Shakespeare because he was a bad man—or so some versions of history would have it. In the 1950s Elizabeth Jenkins, in her *Elizabeth the Great*, mentions Oxford a few times, and at one point, in order to describe just what a problem he was to his poor, beleaguered father-in-law Burghley, compares him to Hamlet (we kid you not).

More recently, in 1987 at the Moot Court Debate before the three Supreme Court Justices, the lawyer representing Stratford went on at some length about all Oxford's shortcomings, sins and just plain badness. Justice Stevens then got the biggest laugh of the day by remarking, "Sounds like a writer to me." And now, after years of waiting, Prof. Alan Nelson's biography of Oxford will be published this spring, and its title is *Monstrous Adversary* (again, we kid you not).

So the theme has been there for a while. Yet, in the course of putting together this issue of the newsletter it seems as if this theme has taken some new twists. For one, take a look at Sky Gilbert's review of *The Beard of Avon* (page one). While it's just a play, the scene it sets could be coming attractions, with the good news being that Oxford is finally being allowed into the room, accompanied by the bad news that Stratfordian Will is still the hero. While someone we discussed this with over the

holidays said "don't worry, the play's just a farce," we can't help but think what an interesting authorship halfway house it represents: acknowledge Oxford, keep Will. Trash Oxford, sanctify Will. That strategy could play out for a long time.

And then, turning to the Toronto conference and the book *Shakespeare's Face* that was a companion to it, we find Prof. Jonathan Bate (see Roger Stritmatter's essay on pages 12-13) going out of his way to predict that Nelson's biography will finish off Oxford—and Oxfordians—by exposing to the world just what a bad man he was, complete with bad Latin. Further, both he and Stanley Wells (in separate chapters in the same book) compare Shakespeare to God, which of course immediately leaves bad Oxford out of the running in the "Who was Shakespeare?" sweepstakes.

Meanwhile, Harvard's Prof. Marjorie Garber (see pages 30-31 in this issue) talks about the Bible and an "all-knowing, all-powerful" Shakespeare who is "beyond authorship," and then belittles anti-Stratfordians for trying to "cut Shakespeare down to size" to suit themselves.

Well, we can only wonder what is going on here, and what's next. Oxford can't be Shakespeare because he's just so bad. Shakespeare is God and Will of Stratford (the reigning Shakespeare) is therefore God. And Oxfordians are going to ruin everything by "cutting him down to size."

So, who's afraid of the big, bad earl? We think the answer is obvious.

Dues increase, book/gift store opens

Our Fellowship members and newsletter readers will notice that the Fellowship's Board voted last December to increase dues for 2003, effective March 1st. The new schedule of fees can be found on p. 30 on the subscription coupon. The reason for these increases is to keep up with the real costs of printing and mailing 32 or 36 page newsletters, plus costs to manage our highly successful website and Discussion Forum. The Board is confident that Fellowship members know that they have gotten their money's worth so far, and will continue to do so in coming years.

We are also pleased to announce a new service for our members in this issue; a book store and gift shop (see p. 28). Two of the books offered are directly related to presentations given at last year's conference, and we hope in the future to continue to identify and offer to our members such eclectic yet quite authorship-relevant items.

The "Winking Bard" was created by commercial artist Katherine Berney (President Chuck Berney's daughter). If members like gift items that use this logo, we will provide more of them later this year.

Letters (continued from page 3)

reference; it is amazing the collective amount of knowledge on the subject.

Thanks everyone for discussing this subject. A wonderful example of the usefulness of Phaeton.

And yet, no more than a few months had lapsed before Mr. Streitz re-entered the forum, blithely writing of Oxford as Elizabeth's son, indicating to all that his book was in progress, and seemingly oblivious of his last post on the subject.

Mr. Streitz goes on to write in his letter,

Mr. Paul in his random comments can only point out a few references that were left out which have bearing only on secondary topics of the book ... [his] failure to mount any defense for the Earl of Hamlet Theory or to bring any salient facts to bear against the premise of Oxford is a de facto concession that the Prince Tudor theory is correct, backed by irrefutable historical and literary evidence.

I would respond that, due to space constraints in this newsletter, my review did not examine so much the conclusions of Mr. Streitz's book as its methods. For a review of the principal theme of the book, I suggest Mr. Streitz read my article in the current edition of *The Oxfordian*.

It's doubtful, of course, that this essay will have any impact upon Mr. Streitz, whose posture is displayed in the latest advertisement for his book, which includes a copy of his letter to Justice Stevens. There he dismisses the recent revelation of the Privy Council's April 17, 1550 authorization for Edward de Vere's baptismal cup as the machinations of William Cecil. One can only wonder if Cecil, who had so thoroughly covered his tracks, was accruing documentation elsewhere to spring on the unknowing public when it came time to unleash his master plan.

A quote from Brian Vickers's recently published book on the Donald Foster-Funeral Elegy fiasco, *Counterfeiting Shakespeare*, seems apropos: "The desire to prove a thesis can blind one to everything else."

Christopher Paul
Atlanta, Georgia
16 December 2002

Response from Paul Streitz:

Mr. Paul admits, "My review did not examine so much the conclusions of the book as its methods." Pray tell, what is the purpose of a

book review, if it is not to examine the conclusions? Most of his current letter avoids the main argument of the book and is not worth a response.

What is worth discussing is the baptismal cup, which he also mentions, and that does bear on the main argument. The knowledge that the Council sent John de Vere a baptismal cup in April 1550 was not available at the time of the first printing. William Cecil orchestrated Elizabeth's move to Cheshunt, the marriage of John de Vere and the placement of the child in the household of John de Vere. However, in the Elizabethan world, there had to be an announcement of a child born to John de Vere at some point. William Cecil accomplished this by having the Council send the baptismal cup. Therefore, there is a clear explanation of the baptismal cup that supports Oxford as the son of Queen Elizabeth.

It would be wonderful if Mr. Paul would deal with facts presented in Oxford: Son of Queen Elizabeth I instead of these long-winded exercises.

To the Editor:

I was surprised to see in the otherwise excellent article by Nathan Baca ("Commemorating Marlowe," Fall 2002) the statement that for "most Oxfordians" it is "beyond doubt" that Marlowe and Edward de Vere collaborated and admired one another. I doubt that most Oxfordians consider their collaboration and mutual admiration to be beyond doubt, although some may consider it possible, despite the lack of any historical evidence for it.

Also, the statement that Shakespeare "even utilizes some of Marlowe's material in his plays" is open to question for Oxfordians since they generally suggest that de Vere began writing plays a decade before Marlowe. He was, after all, fourteen years older. The influence may well have been the reverse.

Finally, I doubt that "many Oxfordians" believe that the Deptford incident spurred de Vere to cloak his identity behind a pseudonym and did so for "protection." Again, it's possible—remotely possible in my view—but there is no historical evidence for it.

Richard F. Whalen
Truro, Massachusetts
11 January 2003

To the Editor:

The Folger Shakespeare Library's posture in regard to the "Ashbourne" portrait (as reported by Stratfordian Stephanie Nolen in Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, November 20th, 2002; see our story on page one of this issue) is only the latest exemplar in that institution's 54-year history of obfuscation, tampering and coverup—all in pursuit of its anyone-but-Oxford policy—ably exposed by Barbara Burris in recent issues of *Shakespeare Matters*.

Shades of the summer of 1979! Then, after promising a joint project with the Shakespeare Oxford Society to make further tests on the Ashbourne, the Folger's director O.B. Hardison presented the Society with a *fait accompli*: the coat of arms already uncovered. This unilateral action on the Folger's part successfully bamboozled the Society's directors (the present writer, his wife, and the late Charlton Ogburn, Jr.) into accepting their Hugh Hamersley identification.

Those present day Oxfordians who would make "nice-nice" with the Folger Library should be warned by these examples. The Folger's staff are not doing us any favors when they make the library's facilities available to Oxfordian scholars. They are required to do so under the terms of Henry Clay Folger's will. Let us hold their feet to the fire—by legal means if necessary—and make sure they honor both the letter and spirit of Mr. Folger's last wishes.

Gordon C. Cyr
Baltimore, Maryland
30 November 2002

Authorship on Cape Cod

The Shakespeare Oxford Seminar on Cape Cod marked the beginning of its tenth year of monthly discussion meetings with a screening last November of *A Conversation with Charlton Ogburn Jr.* at the Wellfleet public library.

The 40-minute videotape was introduced by Laura Wilson, co-producer of 1604 Productions, which videotaped Ogburn in 1997, a year before he died. She and Richard Whalen, co-founder of the Cape Cod organization, led a discussion afterwards of the videotape and Ogburn's book, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*.

228 entries in Essay Contest

The Fellowship's first annual student essay contest turned out to be a resounding success, with a total of 228 entries coming in not just from schools in the US, but from around the world. Entries arrived from such locales as Hong Kong, Malaysia and Australia.

The judging is underway, with a winner to be announced by the end of March. We will report on the results of the contest in our next issue, along with plans for the 2004 contest. The winning essay will be published on the Fellowship's website.

The contest is open to students in grades 9-12, with a total of \$1,250 in cash prizes being offered. Six questions were prepared for students to respond to, with the questions drawing on authorship concerns by asking, "How does the life of a writer enter into the construction of his work?" Or, "...explore the relevance of the play within the play [in *Hamlet*]."

Several teachers, in sending in their class entries, thanked the Fellowship for providing such an interesting opportunity to bring the authorship debate into their classrooms.

16th Oxford Day Banquet, weekend events scheduled for April 25th-26th

The 16th Annual Oxford Day Banquet will be held on Friday, April 25th, 2003, in Cambridge, MA. In a change with tradition, this year's event will be held at the MIT Faculty Club, located on the Charles River overlooking the Boston skyline. There is a parking lot adjacent to the building. The event is sponsored by the Shakespeare Fellowship, and plans again call for expanding Oxford Day into Oxford Weekend.

Scheduled for late Saturday afternoon (April 26th) is a harpsichord recital by Sally Mosher. It will be held at the Chapel of First Church in Cambridge at 5 p.m. Mosher, who has recorded several CDs of her recitals, will play masterworks of the Elizabethan / Jacobean English Renaissance, including works by William Byrd, John Bull, Giles Farnaby, Peter Philips, Jan Sweelinck and Orlando Gibbons (all the works to be played appeared in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, *Parthenia*, and *My Lady Nevell's Book*). Most of this music could also have been played by either Oxford or Queen Elizabeth.

Topics scheduled for Saturday morning panel discussions include "The Ashbourne Portrait: What Next?" (organized

by Bill Boyle), and "State of the Debate," organized by Roger Stritmatter.

Early Saturday afternoon Fellowship trustee Alex McNeil (who once appeared on the TV game show *Jeopardy*, and managed to plug the Oxfordian cause during the "chat" segment) will introduce a new game: *Oxfordian Jeopardy*.

Contact Chuck Berney at cvberney@rcn.com for further details.

Oxford's music in Boston

The Boston-based Foundation for Modern Opera has announced a series of performances and recordings focusing on the plays and poetry of Edward De Vere, (aka William Shakespeare). The project consists of concerts in Worcester, Boston, and the Virgin Islands, with songs set to sonnets and scenes by composer Joseph Summer and others. Summer has been an Oxfordian since 1991 when he began work on his Oxford Songs. For more information about the Shakespeare Concerts, the Foundation, tickets, or composer Joseph Summer, contact Jennifer E. Kline in Boston at 617-748-5114.

Authorship marathon in North Carolina

Diana Price went to Greensboro, North Carolina, to talk about the Shakespeare authorship question, and Greensboro may never be the same.

Twelve presentations in just over four days were on the whirlwind tour organized by Trudy Atkins, a Greensboro publishing executive and a former trustee of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. Atkins has earned a reputation as a superb organizer and promoter of the Oxfordian cause. She was one of the leading coordinators of Charles Burford's speaking tour, and she organized the society's 1995 conference.

Price, an independent scholar and author of Shakespeare's *Unorthodox Biography*, presented the evidence against the Stratford man as the poet/dramatist Shakespeare. Her audiences ranged from high school students to civic leaders to college students and professors. She also did two broadcast interviews. Consider the platforms Atkins signed up for Price.

Bright and early Thursday morning, last September 5, Price addressed about 85

members of the Kiwanis Club at a breakfast held at a country club. At noon, 25 Shakespeare lovers heard her at a meet-the-author luncheon at the Greensboro Central Library. That night, she addressed 60 members of the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival's Producers Roundtable.

Friday was another marathon day. Price spent most of the day talking with high school students—four back-to-back sessions that each went for an hour and half. She reached about 360 students in 12 English classes. During her lunch break, she gave an interview to a local TV news channel. And that night it was more Shakespeare (the real one) with a performance of *Macbeth* at the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival.

Saturday was a book signing at Greensboro's Barnes & Noble bookstore that drew about 15 people, more than most signings, and in the evening a performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Sunday was no day of rest. She ad-

ressed about 85 members of the Greensboro branch of the English-Speaking Union at a luncheon. (Atkins is a leader of the union.) Sunday afternoon, she discussed the case against the Stratford man with an English professor at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. The chair of the English department was the moderator, and about 30 students and professors listened attentively.

Price left on Monday to return home to Cleveland, but not before an interview with the local affiliate of National Public Radio.

"Diana did a great job," said Atkins. "And, yes, I wanted to take advantage of her visit to reach as many people as possible. I always wish the turnout could be larger, but I guess I'm satisfied."

Chuck Berney of Watertown, MA, President of the Shakespeare Fellowship, said, "Trudy is a marvel. I wish we had a dozen like her across the country. It could make a big difference."

—RFW

Fellowship conference (cont'd from page 1)

there is a breakthrough it will only come when one or two leading Stratfordian professors decide to take the issue seriously. He urged Oxfordians to hew to the highest standards of scholarship and to build bridges to the Stratfordian professors, avoid driving them into a corner and show them how they can safely move to neutral ground.

The other Friday presentation—on the Ashbourne portrait—had to be shortened as minor health problems prevented Barbara Burris from attending. Bill Boyle and Gordon Cyr filled in admirably, summing up the story to date. Most interesting, of course, was the information that the Folger Shakespeare Library had decided to send the portrait to Canada for a scientific examination, with the results to be announced in Toronto in November at the “Picturing Shakespeare” conference on the Sanders portrait (see the story on page one, and also our followup story on the scientific testing of the Ashbourne on page 11).

Events then moved to downtown Boston for a panel discussion on “Shakespeare and the Rule of Law” at the Social Law Library. The panel, moderated by Dr. David Lowenthal of Boston College and comprised of a judge, a prosecutor and a former legislator, discussed the relevance of Shakespeare’s philosophy—as expressed in *Measure for Measure*—to today’s world. Over 100 lawyers were there, as well as about 50-60 conference attendees (for more on the panel, see page 7).

Saturday’s schedule of papers began with Dr. Roger Stritmatter leading a discussion about the Oxfordian education of school and university students, and showed a sampling of Mark Alexander’s PowerPoint slide show “25 Connections,” an exciting and illuminating piece of work that summarizes the vast circumstantial evidence for Oxford and the paucity of evidence for Stratford. It is valuable both as a classroom teaching tool, Stritmatter said, or for use by anyone interested in presenting the authorship case to an audience in their home towns.

Other papers were presented by Dr. Daniel Wright (“No Catholics Allowed: Deciphering Reformation Rhetoric and Iconography in Henry VIII”), Stephanie Hughes on Oxford’s legal education (which dovetailed nicely with the Social Law Library Reception and panel) and Dr. Ren Draya (“O Father, Where Art Thou?”). A new



Michael Dunn presented “Sherlock Holmes and the Shakespeare Mystery” at the Saturday Banquet.

Fellowship trustee, local resident Dr. Sarah Smith spoke on a poem (“The Paine of Pleasure”) which she has newly attributed to Oxford (her article appears in the current edition of *The Oxfordian*). Alex McNeil spoke on the uses of pseudonyms in history and literature (his paper, “What’s in a ‘Nym?’” appears in this issue, beginning on page 16).

Hank Whittemore and Bill Boyle spoke back-to-back on the *Sonnets* and Whittemore’s recent theory that they are all about the aftermath of the Essex Rebellion and the end of Elizabeth’s reign (Whittemore’s book on his thesis will be appearing in the coming year). And finally, William Niederkorn of *The New York Times* entertained at the Saturday luncheon, relating how he came to write his February 10th article.

On Sunday Burris’s scheduled paper on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was read by Bill Boyle, and her husband Ron Halstead followed with his own paper on the same topic. Both papers were called “brilliant” by several people there. The highlight of Burris’s work on *Merry Wives* makes it clear that Oxford probably wrote this play in 1570 when he was staying in the town of Windsor at—of all places—the Inn of Windsor. Burris found that there is much evidence corroborating this thesis that has been “out there” the whole time, ranging from the list of books Oxford is known to have purchased in 1569/70 to surviving receipts for expenses he incurred while staying there.

Dr. Eric Altschuler spoke about the supernova of 1604 and how he believed it

became symbolically linked with De Vere’s death, which had occurred a few months earlier. Another highlight on Sunday was Tim Holcomb’s dramatization of *The Sonnets*, during which he actually went around the room, speaking the sonnets to participants as if he were having an everyday conversation with them.

Gerit Quealy’s “Crime of the Millennium” was a clever and funny look at the issue of evidence in the authorship debate, similar to the “solving a crime” theme of Michael Dunn’s “Sherlock Holmes and the Shakespeare Mystery” show, presented after the Saturday evening banquet. Dunn, a resident of Pacific Palisades in southern California, has been performing his show around the country and is finding audiences quite receptive to the authorship debate (for more information on booking Dunn, phone him at 310-230-2929 or send email to: mdunn@truebard.com).

At the Banquet Dan Wright received the first Shakespeare Fellowship Award for his tireless devotion to the movement, a moment which clearly took him by surprise as his appreciative fellow Oxfordians warmly applauded him.

The conference concluded with the much anticipated debate between Dr. Stritmatter and Terry Ross (co-webmaster of the anti-Oxfordian Shakespeare Authorship Page on the Internet). No furniture was thrown and no minds were changed, but it was certainly an entertaining and revealing session. See page 8 for a separate article about the debate.

The Fellowship’s first annual general meeting took only about half an hour, instead of the hour and a half slotted for it, and the feeling of fellowship and bonhomie was exceptional. Chuck Berney was re-elected as President by the membership, Lynne Kositsky was re-elected to the board, and two new members joined the Board: Sarah Smith and Tim Holcomb.

The conference ran very smoothly, with a few minor technical hitches that slowed it up a little. Most, if not all, attendees had a wonderful time. This was a conference where anyone could go and sit at any table and be among friends, even though both Shakespeare Oxford Society and Shakespeare Fellowship members were present. If we can all build on this feeling in the movement as a whole we will all be extremely successful in getting the word out.

—L. Kositsky, R. Whalen, W. Boyle

“Shakespeare and the Rule of Law” panel discussion attracts SRO crowd

The Fellowship Conference was proud to co-sponsor with the Social Law Library in Boston a special Shakespeare event on Friday evening, October 18th, held in the Social Law Library. Fellowship trustee Alex McNeil and newsletter editor William Boyle worked with the library throughout 2002 to put together a panel discussion on “Shakespeare and the Rule of Law.”

The basis for the discussion were the legal and moral dilemmas as presented in *Measure for Measure* and as analyzed in an essay on the play from a book by Prof. David Lowenthal of Boston College, *Shakespeare and the Good Life*. In his book Lowenthal presents his view that Shakespeare’s plays were carefully crafted tales that reflected on his own moral philosophy. And in that regard *Measure* is probably the most carefully crafted. He notes that *Measure* is the only play that has a moral principle as its title (taken from Christ’s words in Luke VI, 37: “For the measure you give will be the measure you get back”). And in the end, he concludes, the Duke as a political leader wishes “[not] to tyrannize over his subjects,” but rather “to affect their thoughts, desires and actions ... by means of influence.”

The format called for a panel of experts in law and jurisprudence (a legislator, a prosecutor and a judge) who would discuss the relevance of the play’s themes to today’s world. The panelists were: William Bulger, President of the University of Massachusetts and former president of the Massachusetts

Senate; the Hon. John Greaney, Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court; and Martha Coakley, District Attorney for Middlesex County. Prof. Lowenthal served as the moderator.

With several scenes from the play used to set the stage (the Duke’s first meeting with the Friar in Act One, and Isabella’s first encounter with Angelo in Act Two being the key scenes), the panel then proceeded—under the direction of Prof. Lowenthal—to address questions such as “Is

it the existence of unpopular and/or unenforceable laws that leads to injustice?” “How can penalties for transgressions of law be ensured to be just,” and “How can any society deal with the human element in administering justice” (i.e. avoiding the moral hypocrisy of an Angelo). Since the panelists had all recently viewed the BBC film of the play and discussed these matters beforehand, the give and take on these issues proved to be illuminating.

In addition, the format of having individuals actively involved in administering justice in today’s world proved quite successful,



The three distinguished panelists were (l to r): Hon. John M. Greaney, Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court; Martha Coakley, District Attorney for Middlesex County; and William Bulger, President of the University of Massachusetts and former President of the Massachusetts Senate.

as each panelist had real world experiences and stories to tell. Coakley (a prosecutor) remarked on knowing in her own offices a young Angelo or two. Coakley also noted how the particular situation in *Measure* (laws about sexual behavior) are also still quite relevant today, and that a prosecutor’s office must make choices about whom to prosecute. And in an age of zero tolerance and minimum sentences justice can be hard to achieve, for simply choosing to prosecute carries with it the sentence.

Justice Greaney echoed Coakley’s points about making choices and noted how judges are actually prevented by mandatory minimum sentence laws from making what they would otherwise consider—in some cases—to be just sentences. He also was the panelist who had the most to say about the Duke in *Measure*, taking him to task for his manipulation of everyone and his actually seeming to play games with life and death decisions in order to impose his own moral solutions on Vienna.

Bulger, a former legislator who is now an educator, remarked that he was delighted to be participating in this panel and have the opportunity to read *Measure* again and think about the questions it raised. In fact, at several points during the evening each of the three panelists remarked on how timely Shakespeare’s play and words are, and how these same issues are still with us today.

Bulger also remarked on the political pressures legislators must deal with in deciding what laws to write in the first place, and acknowledged that the political process can yield imperfect laws. He related a story about knowing a young man who, caught up in a legal situation out of proportion to his offense, threatened to leave town and never come back—and then did just that.

While the authorship question was not the focus of this event, the panelists were well aware that Oxfordians were co-sponsors, and a few remarks were made about “Shakespeare, whoever he was.” And in the followup audience Q&A, Fellowship members on hand did not hesitate to mention Oxford’s name.



David Lowenthal, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Political Science at Boston College, moderated the panel discussion.

Stritmatter, Ross debate Oxford's Bible



Terry Ross (left) says his analysis shows the Bible cannot be Shakespeare's, while Roger Stritmatter argues that it can be—and is.

The most anticipated event of the conference was the debate between Roger Stritmatter and Terry Ross on Oxford's Geneva Bible. Many Oxfordians in attendance were familiar with Ross through his writings on the Internet, but few had met him. He co-manages the pro-Stratford Shakespeare Authorship Page with David Kathman. Ross and Kathman have been severe critics of Stritmatter's work on the Bible over the past 10 years, and of his Ph.D. thesis on the subject in 2001. Extensive sections on their website (www.shakespeareauthorship.com) are devoted to critiquing Stritmatter's work.

The agreed-upon topic for this first face-to-face meeting was, "Resolved: that the annotator of de Vere's Geneva Bible was the author of Shakespeare's works."

However, the real nub of this debate is a point that has concerned Stritmatter since he first took up analyzing these annotations 10 years ago, namely: Is the de Vere Bible a "smoking gun" in the authorship debate which "proves" that Oxford was Shakespeare, or must the Bible and its annotations be taken as simply one more piece of circumstantial evidence in the overall debate?

Stritmatter addressed this point in the opening chapter of his thesis:

The de Vere Bible is not a 'smoking gun.' It *does*, however, supply researchers with a revealing look into the devotional practices which sustained the annotator's creative life... (p. 11)

He also made it clear that he was an Oxfordian, writing from the perspective

that the Bible's owner—Edward de Vere—was in fact Shakespeare, and that this Bible therefore provided a window into Shakespeare's mind. He has never claimed that the Bible itself "proved" that de Vere was Shakespeare.

Over the past 10 years, however, the major counter-arguments to Stritmatter's work have been two-fold: first, that the annotations themselves are not in de Vere's hand (his ownership of the Bible is generally conceded), and second, that any statistical correlation between marked verses in the Bible and Shakespeare's works are "random," therefore indicating that the annotator could not be Shakespeare.

Ross took the position that the annotations have no statistically meaningful correspondence to the Shakespeare Canon (and even questioned whether the annotator was de Vere), while Stritmatter defended his thesis that the annotator was de Vere, and that the annotations do correlate with the Shakespeare Canon in a meaningful way. In particular Ross attacked the statistics presented in Stritmatter's thesis, and even presented samples of Oxford's handwriting which he said "proved" that the annotator could not be Oxford.

It should come as no surprise that the question remained unsettled at the end of the day, but the debate continued on the Fellowship's website Discussion Boards over the next few months (those interested in the details should go to the Boards and look for the thread "Terry's report to HLAS," which began when Ross gave his take on the debate to the Usenet newsgroup humanities.lit.authors.shakespeare. The heart of the extended debate focused upon

Ross's claim that Stritmatter had gotten key statistical information wrong, and further had misread his sources, such as Naseeb Shaheen's studies on Shakespeare's use of the Bible. Stritmatter in turn made the case that Ross had completely missed the fact that Shaheen's statistical tables cite the same verses more than once, therefore totally destroying Ross's key debating point that Shaheen's "high numbers" negate any claim of a statistical correlation between Oxford's Bible and the Shakespeare texts. The Fellowship Discussion Board thread contains the full story in detail.

What should be noted here is a phenomenon that has persisted ever since Stritmatter began his work on the Bible, namely the claim that there must be some "correct" statistical correlation between the annotated Bible verses and the Shakespeare texts, therefore "proving" or "disproving" that Oxford was Shakespeare. Stritmatter has been wary of this particular briar patch since day one, which is why he has always maintained that his Bible research is not a "smoking gun," but just one more nail in the Stratfordian coffin.

The problem here, of course, is the key question, "what is a 'correct' statistical correlation between any author and his working notes, annotated source books, etc.?" The answer quite obviously is that there is no known "correct" answer. In fact, we doubt that anyone has ever developed any empirical data on this question, since literary biographers rarely engage in "proving" that their subject wrote his/her work. It's only in the authorship debate that such questions even get asked. —WBoyle

Moot Court debate on the authorship

The authorship debate was the subject of yet another moot court, this one held in Boston on October 22, 2002. Once again, the decision went to the Stratford man, though Oxford received one of the three judges' votes.

The event was presented as an educational seminar for the judges and staff of Massachusetts' two appellate courts, the Supreme Judicial Court and the Appeals Court, and was held in the SJC's handsome courtroom. The "case" to be presented was that a wealthy philanthropist, Rex Lear, had left a bequest of \$100 million for the benefit of the "Stratford Society," if it could establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the Shakespeare canon was written by Shakspeare of Stratford, or would go to the "Oxford Foundation," if it could establish by the same preponderance that the canon was the work of Edward de Vere.

Arguing the case for Oxford was attorney Alex McNeil, court administrator of the Appeals Court and Shakespeare Fellowship trustee. Arguing for the Stratford man was attorney Robert Bloom, deputy administrative assistant of the Supreme Judicial Court, an ardent history and literature buff. In order to simplify their presentations, the parties stipulated to numerous biographical facts about the two candidates and to a chronology of the publication of the works. Each side also submitted a brief in advance of the argument. The arguments were made to a panel of three judges, consisting of SJC Associate Justice Martha Sosman, Appeals Court Associate Justice James McHugh, and Boston attorney John Curtin, a former president of the American Bar Association. The courtroom was packed—all 150 seats were taken, and several persons had to stand. At least 15 state appellate judges were in attendance.

Both advocates relied on familiar arguments. Arguing first, McNeil outlined the case against Shakspeare – the lack of evidence of education or of literacy, the absence of any contemporaneous document linking the Stratford man to a literary life (compared with positive independent evidence of literacy and/or involvement with literature for the vast majority

of Shakespeare's contemporaries), his apparent failure to educate his two daughters (especially in light of Shakespeare's frequent depiction of literate females), and the lack of a reaction in the literary world to Shakspeare's death in 1616. McNeil then established the case for Edward de Vere as the most likely "true author"—that the

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author was an exceptionally well-educated man who was fluent in several languages and was a patron of literature, that his point of view was that of a nobleman, that (as a nobleman) he couldn't have his name associated with theatrical productions, and that a stand-in or front man was thus needed, a role which Shakspeare came to fill all too well.

Bloom, arguing for the Stratford man, noted the overwhelming weight of scholarly authority backing his candidate, and cited *Greenes Groatsworth of Wit*, Meres's *Palladis Tamia*, Ben Jonson's prefatory remarks in the Folio, and even Aubrey's *Brief Lives* all as contemporary records that supported the case for Shakspeare. He also took issue with the claim that the author's point of view was that of a nobleman, citing *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as an example of a play about common folk. He also cited the author's penchant for using Warwickshire words in his works, as claimed in *The Story of English*.

McNeil used his brief rebuttal time to respond to the latter two points. He noted that most of the words listed as examples of Shakespeare's Warwickshire roots had appeared in print long before any of the plays were published, and would thus have been available to any well-read Englishman. And, relying on Barbara Burris's paper on *Merry Wives* that had just been presented at the SF Conference, he outlined a few of the connections between Oxford's personal life and that play.

At the conclusion of the arguments the three judges, who had asked few questions of either side, retired to deliberate. During the break, McNeil and Bloom fielded questions from the audience, many of whom seemed to be remarkably open to the case for Oxford. The panel returned after about 30 minutes, congratulating both sides. Speaking for the majority (himself and Attorney Curtin), Justice McHugh ruled in favor of Shakspeare, noting that he found persuasive the documents cited by Bloom — *Groatsworth*, *Palladis Tamia* and even Aubrey. Dissenting, Justice Sosman stated that there were too many unexplained gaps in the Shakspeare case (in particular the failure to educate his daughters), that *Palladis Tamia* need not be read as evidence that Shakespeare and Oxford were two separate persons, and that genius, in whatever form it exists within persons, must be nurtured.

Afterward, McNeil admitted that he was disappointed, but not surprised, by the decision. "Two votes for the semiliterate grain-hoarder from Stratford, one vote for the highly educated literary genius from Hedingham," he quipped. "Well, at least Oxfordians got one vote today. That's better than we did before the U.S. Supreme Court justices in 1987."

He also noted that it was interesting to learn what had turned the majority toward the Stratford man: the so-called documentary evidence. "Greene and Meres in particular need to be addressed head-on in a debate such as this one, and have to be very carefully and clearly explained. I thought I'd done that in my brief, and didn't focus on them too extensively during my argument."

Searching (Continued from page 1)

portrait undergo testing at the same institute that had analyzed the Sanders added an authorship element to the proceedings. But even without this development, authorship concerns were present all weekend, starting with the first presentation on Friday afternoon and continuing right on into the following week with a feature article on November 20th in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. The article was written by *Globe and Mail* staff writer Stephanie Nolen, whose book *Shakespeare's Face* (on the Sanders) had just been published and was a "companion" to the conference.

Nolen downplayed the story that the Sanders was most likely not Shakespeare, and the last third of the article was about the small band of Oxfordians "infiltrating" the event (as quoted from what she describes as a "startled conference organizer"). "Nothing," she writes, "irritates a room full of Shakespeareans more than Oxfordians." (For Nolen's reporting on the Ashbourne portion of the conference, see the sidebar on page 11).

The first speaker, Thomas McIntire, got things off to an interesting start with his talk on "Seeing the Big Picture: The Unrelenting Complexity of Historical Inquiry." McIntire's theme on historical inquiry focused on such writers as Nietzsche (*Will to Power*) and Wilhelm Dilthey and the philosophical proposition that history is, in the end, whatever a society or culture agrees it is.

Of interest to Fellowship members in attendance were his remarks about the Shakespeare authorship debate itself as part of this problem of historical inquiry. Pointing to the Sanders Portrait, he remarked that the question is not only "Is it Shakespeare?", but also "Which Shakespeare?" He mentioned Bacon as an alternative Shakespeare, and noted that more recently extensive coverage in *The New York Times* (February 10, 2002) and *Harper's* (April 1999) had made strong statements for the Oxford case.

Marie-Claude Corbeil then presented the Canadian Conservation Institute's scientific findings on the Sanders, most of which had already been published. Basically, the painting is an authentic early 17th century portrait which has never been tampered with or overpainted. Two outstanding questions (which would be revisited several times over the next two days) concerned the date and authenticity of the label identifying the portrait as Shakespeare, and the matter of the missing

portion of the painting (on the right side; the missing portion might have contained the age of the sitter, which would be significant in identifying the sitter as Shaksper). Was the missing portion a small two inch panel that had been broken off, or was it natural damage of some sort? Corbeil said that the Sanders was a two-panel painting, and that the damage was natural.

The final talk on Friday was by Prof. Alexander Leggatt of Victoria University, speaking on "The Sanders Portrait: Why Does it Matter?" (based in part on material in the chapter he contributed to Nolen's *Shakespeare's Face*). This seemed to some Fellowship members in attendance to be a telling view of the state of the authorship debate, circa 2002. In brief, the reason the Sanders Portrait matters is the human face it puts on Shakespeare. The examples Prof. Leggatt offered during his talk sounded as if he was well aware of one of the key issues in the debate, namely the relationship between an author and his work and the purposes behind an author's writing—in short, is writing based on imagination alone, or is it grounded in the realities of an author's life? He seemed to have little use for the notion of the "author-function" as 20th century deconstructionists would have it. In the examples he used about Shakespeare some of our favorite vignettes were used, i.e., Act V, scene I in *As You Like It*, but with the emphasis on William; his remark that in this scene William "defeats" Touchstone (representative of the degenerate court) was not surprising. He also spent several minutes on the "Will" sonnets as personal authorial icons in the works, but of course Oxfordians could write their own books on what he invariably got wrong about those two poems.

Another intriguing use of material familiar to Oxfordians was Leggatt's reading of the "Never Writer to an Ever Reader" preface to *Troilus and Cressida*. He was on the mark in describing it as one of the earliest contemporaneous critiques of Shakespeare's work, and noting how the critique focused on Shakespeare's use of comedy to leave those who attended his plays "better witted than when they came." This observation should perhaps not be too surprising coming from Prof. Leggatt, since his specialties in Shakespeare involve Shakespeare's politics and Shakespeare's comedies, plus Renaissance comedies (all reflected in the books he's published). But it was also at this point that the intersection of the Sanders portrait and the authorship debate became most appar-

ent, since the professor then returned to his earlier observation about the look of the Sanders—the "slight smile and the eyes looking just past the viewer"—and made the connection between the comedic style of the author and the wry look of the portrait.

The first three talks on Saturday, November 16th, covered some basic issues surrounding the Sanders, such as whether a Sanders relative could be identified in the archival records as the John Sanders who supposedly painted the portrait (he couldn't), and general overviews of early 17th century English portrait painting and early 17th English styles of clothing. All these inquiries were designed to validate the early 17th century date on the portrait, and all agreed that they did. This still left unanswered the key question of whether the sitter could be positively identified as Shakespeare/Shaksper, and since no John Sanders could be found who was both a painter and associated in any way with the theatre, the identify of the artist also remains a mystery.

The final panel of the symposium was "Picturing Shakespeare," and included Erin Blake, Art Curator of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Prof. Alan Nelson of UC-Berkeley, who has completed a biography of Oxford, and Prof. Alan Somerset of the University of Western Ontario. This panel had some special significance for the Oxfordians in attendance, as Prof. Nelson has attended a number of Oxfordian events in recent years, as the Folger had just sent the Ashbourne painting to the CCI for testing, and Blake would be announcing the test results (see the sidebar on page 11).

Prof. Somerset led off and delivered a devastating analysis of the carbon dating of the linen label from the Sanders that identified the sitter as Shakespeare, noting that the label was made up of numerous older materials, and so it could easily be of 18th century manufacture and still test as being centuries early. Nelson spoke briefly, and concluded that the Sanders portrait "could not be Shakespeare"

Blake then gave a brief overview of all putative "Shakespeare" portraits over the centuries, and when she got to the Ashbourne she, as expected, spoke about the restoration and the recent CCI tests. The restoration of the painting, she said, was "normal and typical." There was no "destruction" and no "conspiracy" to remove evidence for Oxford. In announcing the CCI results, she said that the inscription

was not a later addition, that the paint used to change the last number in 1612 to 1611 was the same paint as used on the book cover, that no CK monogram was present, that there were no perforations on the canvas, and that the neck ruff had never been larger.

During the Q&A session Blake was asked about the apparent change of the right ear on the Ashbourne (as shown in the Fall 2002 *Shakespeare Matters*), but said she was unaware of any changes to the ear. Asked whether the inscription dating meant that the Folger's position was now that the Ashbourne had been proved to be an early 17th century portrait, Blake responded that she had *not said* that the painting had been dated to the early 17th century. Prof. Nelson spoke up at this point, and said that he found it amazing that Oxfordians tried to claim that all putative Shakespeare portraits were in fact over-painted Oxford portraits (which is, of course, an exaggeration). The audible, supportive audience reaction to Nelson's comment revealed its mostly mainstream, fed-up-with-authorship-arguments sentiment. *Shakespeare Matters* editor Bill Boyle's effort to ask a follow-up question about Nelson's comments was met with an even more vocal response (cutting him off), and that was that.

As the day concluded, however, Fellowship Board member Lynne Kositsky managed to get in one last question on the Sanders, which in turn was adopted by symposium organizer Alexandra Johnston as a good summation of the entire two-day inquiry. Kositsky asked if her observation that all the presentations had shown that it was unlikely that the Sanders was Shakespeare, and, further, that no one would ever be able to prove it, was an accurate assessment. Johnston agreed that it was, and a few moments later, in her closing remarks, referred back to Kositsky's statement while promising that another year of research lay ahead, and perhaps everyone would meet again in another symposium to reassess the Sanders.

Oxfordians who had traveled to snowy Toronto more attracted by the Ashbourne's role in "Picturing Shakespeare" than the Sanders inquiry will have to decide if they'll return. But one thing that was certain was that any questions today involving Shakespeare invariably wind up also involving the Shakespeare authorship debate. That is progress, and there'll be more to come.

Ashbourne Portrait Followup

The nine-page report from the Canadian Conservation Institute on its examination of the Ashbourne portrait (ARL Report 4107, dated October 11, 2002) turns out to be anticlimactic in terms of really settling any of the outstanding issues about the Ashbourne portrait.

The full title of the report is: "Scientific Examination of the Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare/Sir Hugh Hamersley for the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., USA." Therefore the portrait continues to be identified as Sir Hugh Hamersley, and the limited testing done by the CCI (restricted to paint analysis of only the gold paint in the inscription, plus x-rays, infrared and ultraviolet-induced fluorescence photography of the entire portrait) has really done nothing to resolve any of the outstanding issues. The testing done on the painting was limited—at the Folger Shakespeare Library's request—to just the gold paint in the inscription and on the thumb ring, book cover and embroidery.

The stated goal of the examination was "to document the changes made to the portrait using photographic and radiographic methods, and to try to establish if the inscription and other yellow-painted areas were contemporaneous with the painting or were added after, as suggested by Barrell."

The conclusions of the report (p. 5) state:

Several observations made by Barrell were not substantiated by this current photographic and radiographic examination. The only change in composition—currently hidden—is the raising of the sitter's hairline.

The inscription, thumb ring, embroidery on the gauntlet and most of the design on the book cover were painted using the same golden yellow paint, confirmed in the case of the inscription to contain lead-tin yellow. There are no indications that this paint is a later addition, especially considering that it was used in so many parts of the composition. This contradicts Barrell's statements that the inscription was a later addition and that the thumb ring "has been treated to a daubing of the thick orange gold already mentioned."

However, the number "1" painted over the partially-scraped off number "2" in the date and the mask on the book cover were painted using the same pale yellow paint, different in composition from the golden yellow paint used in the rest of the

painting. It is likely that these elements were added when the portrait of the original sitter was transformed into a portrait of Shakespeare.

In the section of the report "Results and Discussion" (p. 2-3) it is also noted that in the CCI x-rays and infrared photographs neither the "CK" monogram nor any indication of a larger ruff could be seen. It is stated in this section that changes in the forehead and hairline could be seen. Finally, in this same section, it is stated that "the canvas is in perfect condition and does not show any perforation."

Rather than respond at length in this issue of the newsletter, we have decided to first order and review all the slides and film taken of the portrait by the CCI (which will take some time), and pick up the story later this year. However, we can state at this point that the limited testing of the portrait amounts to nothing more than "cherry-picking" (no testing was done at all in or around the coat of arms) and begs the issue of whether this is actually a late 16th century painting and whether the *initial* changes to the entire upper left area of the portrait were extensive.

Folger Art Curator Erin Blake is quoted in the Nov. 20th *Globe and Mail* article, "that we have looked carefully at all the evidence in the Ashbourne files," and there is "nothing out of the ordinary." Yet one of the notes left behind by Peter Michaels in 1979 [about his work on the back of the canvas] talks of, "removing wax from back fill holes and thin spots [and] applying patches." The CCI states (p. 2) that the canvas is in "perfect condition," though how they reached this conclusion is not explained. It is contradictions such as this that remain to be resolved. As Barbara Burris has learned in her research, there are ways to repair a canvas that can—at least to x-rays—not show up at all.

There is much, much more that could be said at this point, but we will wait until later. Meanwhile, we should return to that *Globe and Mail* article one more time. In it Blake is quoted, "I also can't prove the painting wasn't deposited by space aliens."

Well, no. But speaking of proof, perhaps the prestigious Folger could revisit the issue of whether they have even proved that the painting is of Sir Hugh Hamersley, which they haven't, and consider removing that identification. —WBoyle

Scenes from the death of a myth

Jonathan Bate and the “God of Our Idolatry”

By Roger Stritmatter

Perhaps the most interesting contribution to Stephanie Nolen’s book *Shakespeare’s Face*—especially from the point of view that Shakespeare matters—is the frenetic essay contributed by Liverpool Professor Jonathan Bate, whose 1997 *The Genius of Shakespeare* marked a regrettably overlooked contribution to the authorship debate. Nolen’s book was reviewed in our last issue (Fall 2002) for what it had to say about the Sanders portrait, and Prof. Bate received due credit from *SM* reviewer Paul Altrocchi for his astute observation that the portrait reminded him of John Fletcher. However, a second look at *Shakespeare’s Face* reveals how inseparable this book is from the authorship question. The theme runs through the entire book, starting with Stanley Wells’s opening essay “The God of Our Idolatry,” and reaching a nadir in Bate’s contribution, “Scenes from the Birth of a Myth and the Death of a Dramatist.”

Over the last 10 years Prof. Bate has become one of the few Stratfordians who have chosen to publicly take on the authorship debate; both he and Wells, appear as orthodox apologists in the Marlowe-as-Shakespeare documentary *Much Ado About Something* (see our review on page 30 of this issue).

But Bate is no newcomer to the authorship question. His *Genius of Shakespeare* often took on the authorship debate, directly or indirectly. And his latest contribution to the debate (in the Nolen book) is vintage populist mythology. In one of the more egregious examples of this Bate quotes a passage from Robert Nye’s fictional *The Late Mr. Shakespeare* about how the eddies under the Clopton bridge in Stratford are similar to eddies described in *Rape of Lucrece*, and how the boy Will once “saw this too.” Bate then asks—incredibly— if the candidate of the “anti-Will brigade” ever stood on Clopton bridge and watched the eddying of the water.

It is not an understatement to say, in fact, that without the need to sally forth to battle the Oxfordian dragon, Bate’s contribution to Nolen’s volume on the

Sanders portrait would have consisted of little more than about two pages. From start to finish the real topic of Bate’s essay is the anxiety he feels about Oxford.

Burying Oxford

Not surprisingly, in view of his recent track record, Jonathan Bate comes not to praise—or even to understand—Oxford, but to bury him. In fact, Bate offers a bold prophecy: Prof. Alan Nelson’s forthcoming biography (*Monstrous Adversary*, scheduled for publication in spring 2003 from the University of Liverpool Press) will cause “the case for Oxford as Shakespeare [to] die in the early twenty-first century, just as that for Bacon died in the early 20th century.” How will this miracle, of scholarship conquering fads and fallacies, transpire? Nelson’s book “will reveal” (drum roll) that Oxford “did not go to grammar school, join the leather trade, or work backstage at a theatre company” (124), these being the three life experiences which Bate regards, with exquisite British self-assurance, as the requisite components in the biography of the man who wrote *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*. “Clearly,” to use one of Bate’s favorite adjectives, such “revelations” prognosticate imminent doom for the Oxford case.

Many of Bate’s argumentative points will strike an informed reader as trite examples of overreaching. His summary of the Oxfordian case is a parody of Stratfordian reasoning. The Oxfordians, moreover, Bate contends, “have *of course* been so busy pointing out the mote in the eye of Stratford William that they have neglected the beam in the eye of the Earl of Oxford” (106 italics added).

What does this beam consist of? Bate informs us that the “very strong case against Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford” as the author of the works includes such magic bullets as Oxford’s brainless use of Latin. “The plays were clearly written by a man reasonably well versed in Latin,” declares Bate, overturning two centuries of Stratfordian dogma to the contrary in the blink of an eye and without comment,

“whereas Oxford’s surviving letters reveal that he was hopeless at Latin” (123). Bate, in fact, seems rather obsessed with the question of Latin: a little earlier in the same essay he assures us that “the eleven year-old Stratford boy [Richard] Quiney had, as we shall see, much better Latin than the mighty earl of Oxford” (110).

The rhetorical strain is very evident; indeed one gets the distinct impression that Bate is conducting a kind of guerrilla warfare on behalf of grammar school boys who were discriminated against in the English University system. Somehow he misses the obvious point that the surviving evidence of Richard Quiney’s no doubt inestimably fine Latin only places a conspicuous spotlight on the complete absence of similar documentary evidence for the hero of his own narrative, who came from the same rusticated background as Quiney but left us no specimens of even English composition in his own hand, let alone the superlative Latin which is testified in the works and was apparently the customary idiom of native son neighbors who did not go on to become world famous writers.

Bate’s critical sensibility fails utterly at this juncture. The Quiney evidence is a two-edged sword. What happened to the special plea of David Kathman’s (co-webmaster of the Shakespeare Authorship Page) that the reason so few literary documents survive for the Stratford man is the intrinsic class bias of the documentary record? Bate can’t be bothered with such contradictions. All he can see is the opportunity to place the beam in Oxford’s eye under the microscope of his own 21st century intellect. Oxford’s Latin was “hopeless,” far worse than poor little Richard Quiney’s!

It would not be fair to imply that Bate makes his case only on Oxford’s bad Latin. Predictably, he places considerable weight on the fact of Oxford’s 1604 death, and even manages to develop a copious paragraph elaborating his belief that this fact disqualifies Oxford’s authorship from rational consideration: “the plays” display

an “intimate knowledge” of the Jacobean court (where? How does Bate define “intimate”?); works such as *Lear* and *Cymbeline* “engage the idea of ‘Britain’” and can’t have been written before James consolidated the union of the three countries under that rubric (say what?); “Shakespeare” co-wrote plays with John Fletcher eight years after Oxford’s death (how does Bate know this?). In between all this Bate manages to summarize Alan Nelson’s work as showing that “the documentary records of Oxford concern such low business as casual killing and pedophilia” (124). Surely this is documentary fetishism at its most laughable.

The First Folio as evidence

But if all this sounds more than a little “over the top,” the reader will be reassured to learn that Bate does also discuss the evidence in favor of his Stratford hero. He terms the 1623 Folio the “strongest evidence of his authorship” (114) while omitting to mention that the Folio was publicly patronized by Oxford’s son-in-law Phillip Montgomery and his brother William Pembroke. Bate, while rejecting the Sanders as a portrait of William of Stratford, is very much enamored of the Folio’s Droeshout engraving:

The title page of the First Folio is adorned with Martin Droeshout’s famous engraving of the dramatist, his forehead domed like the Globe, as if to gesture toward the name of the theatre and the fecundity of his art. (114)

Apparently Bate missed the essay contributed to this same volume by Harvard’s Marjorie Garber in which Garber pokes gentle fun at this sort of phrenological excess (for more on Garber’s views, see also the review on page 30 of this issue).

Clearly Bate sees nothing humorous about the Droeshout engraving; to him the 1623 Folio is “the strongest evidence” (114) in support of the orthodox attribution of the plays.

As might be imagined, Bate makes a big deal about the two introductory epistles included in the Folio which are subscribed with the printed names of John Heminge and Henry Condell, the two business entrepreneurs who managed the Kings Men in 1623 when the Folio was published and by whom, we are told, the manuscripts of the

unpublished plays were provided to the printing firm of Issac Jaggard & Co. Bate finds room in his essay to remind us that these two “are remembered with affection in the will of the Stratford man” as well as being “editors” of the Folio (116). Unfortunately space did not allow Professor Bate to reveal to his readers a damning fact already known to informed persons about the fate of this allegedly watertight circumstantial case: the names of Heminge and Condell are not part of the original draft of the will, but have been interpolated, as an afterthought. The omission of the names from the original drafting of the will, and especially the omission of this fact from Bate’s own narrative, should cause a wary reader to raise an eyebrow.

What is the evidence, moreover, that Heminge and Condell actually were the “editors” of the First Folio? Bate supplies no evidence at all for this claim; the only evidence of any substance to this effect known to the reviewer is that contained in the two introductory epistles themselves—and informed opinion has long suspected that these missives, or at least crucial portions of them, were actually written not by Heminge and Condell, but by Ben Jonson, with the two former gentlemen lending their names to the project for the sake of political decorum.¹

Individually, these omissions from Bate’s narrative might not matter very much. When taken in their totality a depressingly familiar picture with a swollen head emerges: Bate is so busy trying to reassure his readers that the common man “Shakespeare” is alive and well that he is willing to indulge in some preposterously evasive spin to make the story stick. His reasoning is, in the final analysis, completely circular. It is based on the uncontested premise that the printed names of Heminge and Condell attached to the Folio epistles are proof positive of their authorship and of the opacity and veracity of the claims contained therein.

But what are the chances that two busy theatre entrepreneurs/actors, with shows to rehearse and produce, patrons to placate, loans to assume and pay off, and lines to memorize and perfect, would take a year out of their busy lives to perform the Herculean task of editing the huge mass of new literary materials contained in the Folio, a task for which, as actors and producers, they were far less competent to

perform than the wily Ben Jonson? Bate’s entire construct is a house of cards jerry-rigged over an abyss.

Shakespeare as God

Perhaps this should not surprise us. Bate is defending a theological proposition. In his introductory essay to *Shakespeare’s Face* Stanley Wells quotes David Garrick, the founder of the Stratford Jubilee: Shakespeare “is the god of our idolatry.” While Wells’ position on this quote may be an equivocating one, there is no doubt that for Jonathan Bate, the Droeshout is an idol to memorialize a God. Bate concludes his own essay with a sanctimonious shiver: “we must be wary: for who, the Bible reminds us, can look upon the face of God and live?” Thus Stratfordian “scholarship” shades by imperceptible degrees into theological melodrama.

Finally, let us conclude with a postscript which requires no theological enigma. In a recent conversation with this reviewer, Prof. Nelson, who has—unlike Jonathan Bate—attended quite a number of Oxfordian conferences and who—again, unlike Bate—understands very well the intellectual vitality of the case for Oxford’s authorship, expressed his regret over Bate’s fire and brimstone rhetoric in support of the forthcoming Liverpool publication.

Perhaps this is because Prof. Nelson knows very well that the prejudicial animus Bate projects against Oxford can in no way be substantiated by an honest appraisal of the Earl’s accomplishments and life story and is, in fact, an ill-conceived attempt by Bate to use the publicity generated over the Sanders portrait to launch his arrows over the house at the Oxfordians. But if he’s not careful, Bate will end up killing off Nelson instead of Oxfordians.

Endnotes:

1. Edmund Malone, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (London, 1821), II:663-675. See also George Greenwood’s *Ben Jonson and Shakespeare* (Edwin Valentine Mitchell, Hartford Ct. 1921), *Ben Jonson and the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare’s Plays* (offprint, n.d.), and Charlton Ogburn Jr., *The Mysterious William Shakespeare, The Myth and the Reality* (Dodd & Mead: New York, 1984), 208-239. Ogburn’s synopsis of the opinion is particularly effective.

Beard of Avon (continued from page 1)

Will is both inarticulate and talentless, which makes his passion for a stage career somewhat pitiful. He makes a trek to London, where he meets a pair of theatrical producers, who are at first unimpressed. Meanwhile, the decadent and somewhat slimy Edward de Vere is busy dodging Queen Elizabeth's advances and secretly writing plays at court. His effeminate lover (the Earl of Southampton) suggests that de Vere might find a beard and write under another name. The country bumpkin Will proves to be the perfect candidate, and at the end of act one—as the two join forces for the premiere of *Titus Andronicus*—all seems secure for Oxfordians.

More than a beard

However, in Act Two (as often happens) things take a turn for the theoretical and theatrical worse, for it is implied that de Vere's cohort Will is something more than just a beard (he has writerly impulses himself) and the two begin collaborating to write *The Comedy of Errors* and (it is implied) Shakespeare's most profound later works. Soon the whole of the court (including Derby and Bacon) are passing their latest theatrical efforts to the Stratfordian Will, and we begin to see that Shakespeare was a beard for most upper class intellectuals including, perhaps, Elizabeth herself.

Meanwhile, the Stratfordian Will successfully works out his relationship with his wife—who proves to be more lovesick than henpecking—and the play closes with the death of Edward de Vere from the plague. But there is a sense that the wide-eyed young Stratfordian Will (whose plucky romantic spirit resembles Joseph Fiennes's in *Shakespeare In Love*) will somehow transform himself (presumably through his association with the great wits of Elizabeth's circle) into the most revered

poet and theatrical artist the western world has ever known.

That the play presents something more than a simple Oxfordian premise is not my concern here. While I find myself every day more and more convinced that the Stratfordian Will did not write these plays and poems, I still—as an almost-confirmed-Oxfordian—ask now and then if there was

of multi-author theory.

What interests me—and what this play neatly affords us—is a chance to see clearly the implications that the Stratfordian and Oxfordian models offer our culture.

In Freed's play there is an obvious attempt to confront sexual politics in a contemporary and open-minded way. In other words, the female characters—Anne Hathaway and Queen Elizabeth—are constrained by gender, and constantly make frustrated and very human attempts to transcend the limits placed upon them. Anne, for instance, dresses up as whore to seduce her husband, and the Queen is transported to a rather unqueenly ecstasy upon seeing her own play—*The Taming of The Shrew*—performed at court. Similarly—as is typical of the most politically progressive contemporary plays in our culture—the homosexual characters are presented with warmth and sympathy.

Kudos to Amy Freed for that. Unfortunately for Oxfordians (and fortunately for those of us who wish to analyze the play's hidden cultural message) the text makes it quite clear that Edward de Vere could not possibly have written the great works himself. Why?

Well, de Vere is presented—quite accurately, since history bears this out—as a less than perfect person. In fact in Freed's text he is—from beginning to end—somewhat of a reprobate, a black sheep, a highly sexed dissipated. We know all this about de Vere (and of course it makes him a likely candidate as creator of the son-

nets, in which a self deprecating author chides himself with shame).

But the play offers us a further insight which is more fanciful and suits the author's—and the Stratfordian—purpose: de Vere is also heartless. That homosexuality, promiscuity, and heartlessness go hand in hand is never questioned in the text. It is



Fig. 1

Photography by Cylia von Tiedemann



Fig. 2

Photography by Cylia von Tiedemann

In these scenes from The Beard of Avon can be seen the overall arc of Freed's presentation of the authorship issue. First, in Fig. 1 we have an early encounter between the upcoming would-be actor Shaksper (holding a spear no less) and Edward de Vere, the powerful courtier/writer. In Fig. 2 we see de Vere's relations with Elizabeth nicely summarized with her trying to shut him up.

not another hand (or several other hands) involved in their creation.

Authorship models

Amy Freed has read the authorship theories thoroughly, and her play offers an amalgam of them, concluding with a sort

also something which the Toronto opening night audience obviously felt was not only poetically just, but which, frankly, just made them feel a whole lot better.

A model author

Though the play forced them to watch the decadent Edward de Vere and his effeminate lover Southampton chatting about art in bed together, it also rewarded them with the rigorously heterosexual Stratfordian Will's sympathetic attempts to grow—through typical heterosexual adventures in life and love—into a consummate artist. Stratfordian Will, you see, had the heart, and de Vere had the education and the refined wit. No one man, the play clearly implies, could have had both, and certainly the calculating, Wildean de Vere could not possibly have written the plays all by his lonesome.

The Stratfordian Will's rather sudden transformation into artist is, of course, not carefully articulated in the play. One has the feeling that his unlikely metamorphosis comes part and parcel with those fictions which would have us believe that an ill-educated small businessman penned *Antony and Cleopatra*.

In other words, it is Stratfordian Will's sheer down-on-his-luck-good-heartedness, his charmingly heterosexual stagestruckness, from which bursts forth a preponderance of eloquence which, shall we say, "passeth show."

But I want to stretch this paradigm a bit further. For it is not that the play asks us to distrust de Vere simply because he is a homosexual (or bisexual, as it is trendily unclear in Freed's play exactly what his sexual identity is) but because he is unrepentantly evil. (In his period garb de Vere resembles a typical medieval vice figure actually—or the dandified Mephistopheles in Gonou'd's *Faust*.)

And here we come to the crux of the matter. What lies at the very heart of the authorship controversy is really the notion of artist as saint. I would posit that—just as each era produces its own version of Shakespeare's works (the notorious Victorian adaptations of the plays are a case in point)—each era produces its own Shakespeare.

tions of woman, marriage, nation, and artistic expression itself. As we stew in an early twenty-first century quagmire of neo-Victorian sexual conservatism, an era when marriage, religion, the family, and Disney once more protect us from the (outside) Forces of Evil, it is no wonder that the Stratfordian Will offers such a safe and desirable harbor.

The simple truth for our era is this (and it is simple to the point of simplemindedness): Shakespeare's plays could not have been written by a Bad Man. Yes, he is allowed to have quarreled with his wife and perhaps to have been truant at school (these personal details, in fact, endear him to us) or to have neglected, occasionally, to pay the bills. But he will categorically not—I repeat *not*—be allowed the history of a drunken, diseased, promiscuous homosexual (or even an irresponsible and somewhat cruel human being). The simple truth of our era is that only good people (good by our rather stringent, homophobic, Victorian and xenophobic present day standards) are capable of producing great art.

Until this paradigm is confronted at its sociological, philosophical and ultimately political core—or until times change—it will be hard knocks for the all too real and all too human aesthete de Vere, and triumphant tourist parties at Stratford-on-Avon for the quite fictional (yet so bumbling and endearing) Stratfordian Will.

Sky Gilbert has written and directed 21 of his own plays in and around Toronto. A local writer, actor, and film-maker, the talented Mr. Gilbert has long been an open-minded but relatively quiet skeptic on the subject of Shakespeare's identity as well as a founding light in the Shakespeare Fellowship. His theatrical productions have been hailed as Toronto's finest: "The truth is," said the Toronto Globe about Gilbert's Lola Starr, "Sky Gilbert has more theatrical flair in his little finger than anybody else in the Toronto scene...."



Fig. 3

Photography by Cylia von Tiedemann



Fig. 4

Photography by Cylia von Tiedemann

In Fig. 3 we see Freed's take on the homosexual angle on the Oxford / Southampton relationship. Southampton is pretty in pink and generally prances about the stage. Finally, in Fig. 4, we see a now disheveled de Vere pleading for help from a rising Shaksper, holding in his right hand a play script. Without him de Vere would be nothing, or so Freed's play tells the story.

The simple truth

It's no accident that Looney's book challenging the Stratfordian candidate appeared in the early part of the twentieth century, at a time when sociological and cultural forces were moving with astonishing ferocity to tear down old construc-

What's in a 'Nym?

Pseudonyms, heteronyms and the remarkable case of Fernando Pessoa

By Alex McNeil

If there's one thing Oxfordians can agree on, it's that Edward de Vere used an alias as a professional writer. His most famous alias, of course, was William Shakespeare. It's highly likely that he used other aliases as well during his career (I suppose he'd probably cringe at the use of the word "career").

We may disagree about whether "William Shakespeare" was a name made up by de Vere, or whether de Vere's imagination was somehow sparked after meeting a man from Stratford-on-Avon with a remarkably similar name. In any event, the name "William Shakespeare," as used by de Vere, can be termed a pseudonym, literally a "false name" (from the Greek *pseudes*, false and *onoma*, name).

The use of pseudonyms, especially by those in the arts, is common. It may be worthwhile to catalog some of the reasons why persons use pseudonyms; perhaps the exercise will help us gain some insight on de Vere's reason or reasons for doing so. The list below is by no means inclusive, and in some cases the categories I've used may overlap with one another. Here's my highly arbitrary list of the Top Ten Reasons Why Artists Use Pseudonyms:

- The real name may be too hard to spell, pronounce or remember. Performers are especially likely to choose a pseudonym, or even change their names legally, for this reason. Let's face it – Doris Day is easier to remember than Doris Kappelhoff, and Chad Everett has a nicer ring to it than Raymond Cramton.

- The real name may be "too ethnic." The artist may want to appear as domestically mainstream as possible. Thus, in films Ramon Estevez becomes Martin Sheen, Raquel Tejada becomes Raquel Welch, and in literature Teodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski becomes Joseph Conrad by retaining and anglicizing his middle names.

- The artist may want to use the pseudonym to "make a statement." Whoever wrote the "Martin Mar-prelate" tracts (and there is reason to suspect Oxford here) chose that name for obvious reasons. In

modern times, would the Sex Pistols have been the Sex Pistols without Johnny Rotten (nee John Lydon) and Sid Vicious (nee John Simon Ritchie)?

- The artist may be making a joke.



Fernando Pessoa, 1888-1935

Edward Gorey used several anagrams of his name, thereby coming up with Dreary Wodge, Dogear Wryde, and Garrod Weedy.

- The artist may be saluting a personal hero. Bob Zimmerman chose the name Bob Dylan because of his infatuation with Welsh poet Dylan Thomas.

- Perhaps there are gender issues. Mary Ann Evans is far better known as George Eliot. Edward Stratemeyer considered the genders of his readers when he chose two pseudonyms – Franklin W. Dixon for the Hardy Boys stories and Carolyn Keene for the Nancy Drew mysteries. His daughter, Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, continued the pseudonyms when she took over after her father's death.

- Two or more persons may be collaborating. Amandine Dupin Dudevant collaborated with Jules Sandeau on her first two novels, which were published under the name of Jules Sand; when she wrote on her own, it was a short step to the new

pseudonym of George Sand. More recently, the spicy novel *Naked Came the Stranger* was among the top ten most popular fiction works of 1969. Although it bore the name "Penelope Ashe" on the cover, it was actually the effort of a group of journalists, mostly from *Newsday*, each of whom took a turn writing a chapter.

- The artist may be embarrassed to have his or her name associated with the work, usually because the work has been altered by others. Sci fi author Harlan Ellison (who used at least 25 pseudonyms) created a syndicated television series, *Starlost*, in 1973; he was so disappointed with the finished product that he had his name removed from the credits, substituting the moniker Cordwainer Bird instead.¹ Another modern example is the name "Alan Smithee," coined by the Directors Guild of America in 1967 for use by a film director who can demonstrate to the Guild's satisfaction that a to-be-released motion picture is catastrophically inferior to the director's version. Over the past 35 years "Alan Smithee" has directed quite a few dramas, comedies and adventure films, all of them terrible. In one of showbiz's great ironies, Arthur Hiller (former DGA president) directed the 1997 comedy, *An Alan Smithee Film: Burn Hollywood Burn!* You guessed it—Hiller was so offended by the final cut that he successfully petitioned the Guild to remove his name and to give Alan Smithee yet another directing credit.

- Legal or contractual reasons may prevent the artist from using his or her real name. John Wilson's teaching contract prohibited him from publishing fiction under his own name, so he put out his first novel using his two middle names – Anthony Burgess.² A more shameful example comes from America's "Red Scare" in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when a number of actors, writers and directors were accused of being Communists; those who refused to "name names" were "black-listed," effectively prohibited from working in their respective professions. For actors and directors, who of course had to appear in person on the set, the blacklist was totally effective.³ Blacklisted writers,

however, could employ a variety of methods to remain in their craft. Some used pseudonyms, some collaborated with another writer (who would get the sole on-screen credit but would presumably share the paycheck), some worked anonymously (e.g., rewriting a script submitted by a first writer, who would get sole credit), and some used “front men” – real persons who held themselves out as the ostensible authors of material written by the blacklisted writers.⁴

•The writer may be writing outside of his or her milieu. When writing poetry, anthropologist Ruth Benedict used the name Anne Singleton; Ezra Pound wrote art criticism as B. H. Dias. Other examples exist.⁵

No doubt there are other reasons for the use of pseudonyms, but the ten listed above must be the most common. How many apply to de Vere / “Shakespeare”? It’s hard to say. A few reasons can be ruled out easily—Oxford wasn’t concerned that his own name was too hard to spell, or was too “ethnic,” nor was he concerned with gender issues. We do not know of anyone named “William” or “Shakespeare” who was a personal hero to Oxford. Likewise, it’s impossible to conceive that Oxford viewed the Shakespeare pseudonym as a joke. But there are aspects of the remaining five reasons that hold appeal in varying degrees for Oxfordians.

•Oxford chose the Shakespeare pseudonym to make a statement. This view was championed by Charlton Ogburn, Jr., who maintained in brief that Oxford chose the name because of its pregnant symbolism—the image of Pallas Athena, patron goddess of Athens, birthplace of the theatre, brandishing a spear, coupled with the image of the playwright wielding his pen as a sword. The existence of a real person with a strikingly similar name was coincidental, having nothing to do with the coining of the pseudonym.

•A collaboration—some Oxfordians see Oxford as the patron of a number of young Elizabethan writers, including Lyly, Lodge, Nashe, Kyd, and Marlowe. Perhaps Oxford functioned somewhat like a head writer on a contemporary TV show, inspiring and supervising his underlings, and polishing their efforts. They see evidence of multiple hands in a number of plays in the Canon, and consider “William Shakespeare” to be a pen name chosen for

this largely collaborative effort.

•The other three reasons (embarrassment, legal reasons, and writing outside one’s milieu) can best be discussed together, as none fits exactly and elements of each are present. In this scenario, social mores, rather than strictly legal reasons, prohibited Oxford from publishing under his own name. In Elizabethan times, it was unthinkable for a member of the nobility to publish plays (or almost any piece of

***“...a heteronymic work
is by an author
writing outside his
own personality: it
is the work of a
complete individuality
made up by him,
just as the
utterances of
some character
would be.”***

fiction) bearing his name; such an association would bring shame on his entire family. Thus, the “embarrassment” factor is present here, too, although the author is not embarrassed by the inferior quality of the finished work, but rather is embarrassed to be known as the author of anything in that genre. In that sense, the third factor—writing outside one’s milieu—is also present, for in Elizabeth’s day it was all right for a nobleman to write an English translation of another work, or even to write poetry as long as it circulated privately and was not published. In this scenario, William Shakspeare of Stratford is the analog of a front man—a real person who can deal with printers and who can appear as the true author if a need should arise. (One assumes that Shakspeare lacked the pangs of guilt that led twentieth century front man Seymour Kern to back out. See footnote 4.)

There is another form of pseudonym, employed more rarely than the above ten, which brings us to the remarkable case of the Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935). Pessoa wrote under his own name, but also used many pseudonyms throughout his life (some estimates run as high as 75). He is best known for three: Alberto Caeiro, Ricardo Reis, and Alvaro de Campos. Pessoa took pains to explain that these alter egos were not simply pseudonyms, but—to use Pessoa’s term—*heteronyms*. “A pseudonymic work,” he explained in a 1928 article, “is, except for the name with which it is signed, the work of an author writing as himself; a heteronymic work is by an author writing outside his own personality: it is the work of a complete individuality made up by him, just as the utterances of some character would be.”⁶

Caeiro, Reis and Campos were poets, each with his own distinctive style. Caeiro, “the Master,” embraced “pastoral and philosophical themes.” Reis and Campos were disciples of Caeiro, but Reis wrote “exquisitely formal verses” while Campos was “a ranting experimentalist.”⁷ As Pessoa himself explained, in a preface to a never-issued compilation of his heteronymic works, Caeiro rediscovered paganism, Reis “intensified” it “and made it artistically orthodox,” while Campos, “basing himself on another part of Caeiro’s work, developed an entirely different system, founded exclusively on sensations.”⁸ Reis and Campos also wrote prose, and occasionally disagreed with each other on how to interpret “the Master,” Caeiro’s, works.

In a letter to magazine editor Adolfo Casais Monteiro in 1935, Pessoa offered an explanation of the genesis of the three heteronyms:

. . . It one day occurred to me to play a joke on [fellow poet Mario] Sa-Carneiro – to invent a rather complicated bucolic poet whom I would present in some guise of reality that I’ve since forgotten. I spent a few days trying in vain to envision this poet. One day when I’d finally given up – it was March 8, 1914 – I walked over to a high chest of drawers, took a piece of paper, and began to write standing up, as I do whenever I can. And I wrote thirty-some poems at once, in a kind of ecstasy I’m unable to describe. It was the triumphal day of my

(Continued on page 18)

What's in a Nym (continued from page 17)

life, and I can never have another one like it. I began with a title, The Keeper of Sheep. This was followed by the appearance in me of someone whom I instantly named Alberto Caeiro. Excuse the absurdity of this statement: my master had appeared in me. That was what I immediately felt, and so strong was the feeling that, as soon as those thirty-odd poems were written, I grabbed a fresh sheet of paper and wrote, again all at once, the six poems that constitute "Slanting Rain," by Fernando Pessoa. All at once and with total concentration. . . . It was the return of Fernando Pessoa as Alberto Caeiro to Fernando Pessoa himself. Or rather, it was the reaction of Fernando Pessoa against his nonexistence as Alberto Caeiro.

Once Alberto Caeiro had appeared, I instinctively and subconsciously tried to find disciples for him. From Caeiro's false paganism I extracted the latent Ricardo Reis, at last discovering his name and adjusting him to his true self, for now I actually saw him. And then a new individual, quite the opposite of Ricardo Reis, suddenly and impetuously came to me. In an unbroken stream, without interruptions or corrections, the ode whose name is "Triumphal Ode," by the man whose name is none other than Alvaro de Campos, issued from my typewriter.⁹

Pessoa invented biographies and physical descriptions of his main heteronyms. Caeiro was born in Lisbon in 1889 and committed suicide in 1915; Reis was born in 1887 in Oporto, became a physician, and moved to Brazil in 1919; Campos was born in 1890, studied to be a naval engineer in Glasgow, and met Caeiro by chance while visiting Lisbon.¹⁰ Pessoa even claimed to have met Campos.

Although Pessoa readily admitted creating his heteronyms, he refused to concede that they didn't actually exist. As he noted in the preface to the never-issued collection of his heteronymic works, "The author of these books cannot affirm that all these different and well-defined personalities who have incorporeally passed through his soul don't exist, for he does not know what it means to exist, nor whether Hamlet or Shakespeare is more real, or truly real."¹¹

It is interesting that Pessoa mentioned "Shakespeare" in this context. Pessoa's own

life resembled Oxford's in several ways. Both men lost their fathers at an early age—Pessoa was five when his father died. Indeed, Pessoa later reported that the first of his heteronyms appeared shortly afterward, "a certain Chevalier de Pas, when I was six years of age, from whom I wrote letters to myself, and whose figure, not completely vague, still dominates that part of my affection confined to longing."¹² Both Oxford and Pessoa were fluent in

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—Fernando Pessoa***

several languages. Though he was born in Portugal, Pessoa lived in Durban, South Africa (or Natal, as the British colony was then known), from age seven to seventeen, as his mother had married a Portuguese diplomat who was stationed there. In Durban he attended an English school and began to write poetry in English. He also became fluent in French, and would write prose and poetry in all three languages. Both men were exceptionally well read and were interested in many subjects. Pessoa not only wrote poems (including 35 sonnets in English), plays (most of them unfinished), and short stories, but also epigrams, translations, political tracts, and essays on subjects as diverse as alchemy, Rosicrucianism, and Mahatma Gandhi. One of his heteronyms, Bernardo Soares, "defended prose as the highest art form."¹³ Both men befriended and encouraged other young writers.¹⁴

Only a small portion of Pessoa's copious literary output was published during his lifetime. After his death (from cirrhosis of the liver) in 1935, his literary executors found a steamer trunk full of papers—some 25,000 documents, in English, French and Portuguese, some finished, many not.¹⁵ His complete works have yet to be published.

Among the many writers whose works Pessoa had read, and among the many topics about which he wrote, was Shakespeare. If Pessoa was aware of the authorship controversy, he did not address it, at least in those of his writings which have so far been published.¹⁶ One translator notes that he "left many passages for a projected essay on Shakespeare."¹⁷ Of those that have surfaced, several are fascinating because of their insight into the creative process.

Unquestionably, Pessoa appreciated Shakespeare's greatness. In a 1930 essay titled "The Levels of Lyric Poetry," Pessoa identified four levels of consciousness expressed by the lyric poet. Those at the first level (the "most common" and "least estimable") expressed their emotions, but did so in a "monotonic" way, expressing a relatively small number of emotions. Those at the second level were "more intellectual or imaginative or even simply more cultured," and were not "monotonic." Pessoa did not identify any specific poets as level one or level two. At the third level "the poet, more intellectual still, begins to depersonalize, not just because he feels, but because he thinks he feels—feels states of the soul that he really does not possess, simply because he understands them. We are on the threshold of dramatic poetry in its innermost essence." As exemplars of this level, Pessoa named Tennyson (specifically, "Ulysses" and "The Lady of Shalott") and Browning's so-called "dramatic poems." At the fourth ("much rarer") level, "the poet, more intellectual still but equally imaginative, fully undergoes depersonalization. He not only feels but lives the states of soul that he does not possess directly." At this supreme level Pessoa placed Shakespeare and also Browning. "Now, not even the style defines the unity of the man; only what is intellectual in the style denotes it. Thus in Shakespeare, in whom the unexpected prominence of phrase, the subtlety and complexity of expression, are the only things that make the

speech of Hamlet approximate to that of King Lear, of Falstaff, of Lady Macbeth.”¹⁸

Elsewhere, Pessoa again recognized Shakespeare’s genius, but qualified his adulation because of his concern for the writer’s state of mind:

He had, in a degree never surpassed, the intuition of character and the broad-hearted comprehension of humanity; he had, in a degree never surpassed, the arts of diction and of expression. But he lacked one thing: balance, sanity, discipline. The fact that he entered into states of mind as far apart as the abstract spirituality of Ariel and the coarse humanity of Falstaff did to some extent create a balance in his unbalance. But at bottom he is not sane or balanced.¹⁹

In the same essay Pessoa asserted that Shakespeare’s lack of sanity and balance made his plays and poems “from the pure artistic standpoint, the greatest failure that the world has ever looked on.” More specifically, he attributed that failure to “the fundamental defects of the Christian attitude towards life.”²⁰

Pessoa’s longest discourse on Shakespeare was probably written in 1928. In it he offers remarkable observations about the man who was Shakespeare. Because Pessoa apparently accepted the Stratford man as the poet/playwright, not all of his insights are accurate as far as Oxfordians are concerned, but many seem to fit what we know of Oxford to an uncanny degree. First, Pessoa characterized Shakespeare, like all great lyric poets, as “hysteric,” i.e., given to outbursts of emotion. He deduced that Shakespeare was “a hysteric” in his youth and early adulthood, “a hystero-neurasthenic” in manhood, and “a hystero-neurasthenic in a lesser degree” toward the end of his life.²¹ Pessoa does not define “hystero-neurasthenic,” but presumably he means one whose emotional condition brings about feelings of debility, fatigue and inadequacy. Pessoa continues:

Great as his tragedies are, none of them is greater than the tragedy of his own life. The gods gave him all great gifts but one: the one they gave not was the power to use those gifts greatly. He stands forth as the greatest example of genius, pure genius, genius immortal and unavailing. His creative power was shattered into a thousand

fragments by the stress and oppression of [such things.] It is but the shreds of itself. *Disjecta membra*, said Carlyle, are what we have of any poet, or of any man. Of no poet or man is this truer than of Shakespeare.

He stands before us, melancholy, witty, at times half insane, never losing his hold on the objective world, ever knowing what he wants, dreaming ever higher purposes and impossible greatnesses, and waking ever to mean ends and low triumphs. This,

***“He was certain
that Shakespeare
was unappreciated
during his lifetime,
mainly because
he was ahead
of his time, or,
as Pessoa put it,
‘above his age.’”***

this was his great experience of life; for there is no great experience of life that is not, finally, the calm experience of disillusion.²²

Pessoa believed that Shakespeare’s two long narrative poems were “highly imperfect as narrative wholes, and that is the beginning of his secret.”²³ He was certain that Shakespeare was unappreciated during his lifetime, mainly because he was ahead of his time, or, as Pessoa put it, “above his age.”²⁴ Shakespeare’s awareness of his unappreciation, coupled with appreciation shown to lesser writers and Shakespeare’s “knowing himself (for this he must have done) the greatest genius of his age,” must have shaken or destroyed his vanity and brought about depression. And yet, Pessoa concludes, Shakespeare was able to rise above depression by continuing to write, and in so doing Pessoa sees

Shakespeare grappling with the spectre of insanity:

Depression leads to inaction: the writing of plays is, however, action. It may have been born of three things: (1) the need to write them – the practical need, we mean; (2) the recuperative power of a temperament not organically (only) depressed, reacting in the intervals of depression against depression itself; (3) the stress of extreme suffering – not depression, but suffering – acting like a lash on a cowering sadness, driving it into expression as into a lair, into objectivity as into an outlet from self, for, as Goethe said, “Action consoles of all.”

... The need to write these plays shows in the intensity and bitterness of the phrases that voice depression – not quiet, half-peaceful, and somewhat indifferent, as in *The Tempest*, but restless, somber, dully forceful. Nothing depresses more than the necessity to act when there is no desire to act. The recuperative power of the temperament, the great boon to Shakespeare’s hysteria, shows in the fact that there is no lowering, but a heightening, of his genius. The part of that due to natural growth need not and cannot be denied. But the overcuriousness of expression, the overintelligence that sometimes dulls the edge of dramatic intuition (as in Laertes’ phrases before mad Ophelia) cannot be explained on that line, because these are not peculiarities [in the] growth of genius but [are] more natural to its youth than to its virile age. They are patently the effort of the intellect to crush out emotion, to cover depression, to oust preoccupation of distress by preoccupation of thought. But the lash of outward mischance (no one can now say what, or how brought about, and to what degree by the man himself) is very evident in the constant choice of abnormal mental states for the basis of these tragedies. Only the dramatic mind wincing under the strain of outer evil thus projects itself instinctively into figures which must utter wholly the derangement that is partly its own.²⁵

Has anyone come closer, in just two paragraphs, to getting inside the mind of the man who was Shakespeare?

To be sure, much of what Pessoa saw in Shakespeare—or projected onto Shake-

(Continued on page 20)

What's in a Nym (Continued from page 19) speare—was exhibited in Pessoa himself. Pessoa described himself as a “neuras-thenic hysteric,” questioned his own sanity, and certainly felt unappreciated. He was ahead of his time—only in recent years has his talent come to be recognized widely.²⁶

What is significant is that this extraordinary insight into the mind of Shakespeare comes not from a critic, an academic or a historian, but from a person with remarkably similar creative impulses and talents. Even more significant is that this writer used self-created distinctive personalities – heteronyms – to channel his creative powers. For Pessoa to create fully, he had to lose himself fully within his heteronyms.

And just perhaps, so did Edward de Vere. Though we have seen that there were eminently pragmatic reasons for de Vere to use the Shakespeare pseudonym – to avoid shame and embarrassment while maintaining some control over the publication process – perhaps there were purely artistic reasons as well. Perhaps the existence of the Shakespeare pseudonym freed de Vere to be someone who was not himself. As Pessoa put it, “To feign is to know oneself.”²⁷

Editor's Note:

Always Astonished: Selected Prose by Fernando Pessoa is an introductory collection of Fernando Pessoa's prose work (including his fascinating essay, “On Shakespeare”) that is available from the Fellowship. See the ad on page 28.

Endnotes:

- ¹ Alex McNeil, *Total Television* (4th ed., Penguin, 1996), 788.
- ² Kevin Jackson, *Invisible Forms: Literary Curiosities* (Macmillan, 1999), 18.
- ³ For example, Jeff Corey did not appear in a movie between 1951 and 1963, and became a well-respected acting teacher during the forced hiatus. Lionel Stander also had no film credits between 1951 and 1963; he moved to New York and became a successful stockbroker. Patrick McGilligan & Paul Buhle, *Tender Comrades: A Backstory of the Hollywood Blacklist* (St. Martin's Press, 1997), at 177-198, 607-625.
- ⁴ See generally *Tender Comrades*, op.cit. For example, blacklisted writer John Berry recalled revising another writer's script, but leaving out the characters' names in the revision; the first writer merely added them back in to get the credit. Id. at 71. Writer Ernest Kinoy served as the “front” for

blacklisted writer Millard Lampell while both wrote for the 1954 TV series *The Marriage*. Id. at 398. Blacklisted writer Robert Lees wrote scripts for *Lassie* using as a front a non-writer friend, Seymour Kern, and letting the front keep ten per cent of the fees. Kern backed out after a year because he “couldn't take being complimented by his family and friends for work he didn't do.” Lees then coined a pseudonym, J. E. Selby. Id. at 436-437.

- ⁵ *Invisible Forms*, op. cit., 29-31.
- ⁶ Id. at 41-42.
- ⁷ Id. at 38.
- ⁸ Richard Zenith (ed. & trans.), *The Selected Prose of Fernando Pessoa* (Grove Press, 2001), 3. A fourth heteronym, Antonio Mora, was a “philosophical follower” of Caero, though not a poet, and Pessoa foresaw a fifth (unnamed) heteronymic philosopher who would write “an apology for paganism based on entirely different arguments.” Ibid.
- ⁹ Id. at 256. A slightly different translation may be found in Edwin Honig (ed. & trans.), *Always Astonished: Selected Prose by Fernando Pessoa* (City Lights Books, 1988), 9-10. Some Pessoa scholars doubt Pessoa's account. See <http://home.earthlink.net/kunos/Pessoa/interview.html>, where translator Chris Daniels observes, “That's the myth he propagated. You have to take Pessoa's statements about the genesis of heteronymy with a grain of salt. He prevaricated a lot.”
- ¹⁰ Honig at 10-11, 23.
- ¹¹ Zenith at 2.
- ¹² Honig at 8.
- ¹³ Zenith at xiv.
- ¹⁴ Honig at v.
- ¹⁵ Pessoa lamented that he hated to begin a new work, and, having begun, hated to finish it. Honig at vii.
- ¹⁶ In an essay dated 1910, Pessoa refers to “the ‘Shakespeare Problem,’” but does not explain further. In another writing he used the term “anti-Stratfordians,” but the context does not seem concerned with the authorship question. See Honig at 4 & 46.
- ¹⁷ Zenith at 335-336.
- ¹⁸ Honig at 65-66.
- ¹⁹ Zenith at 215.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ He also believed that Shakespeare was of frail constitution and deficient vitality, but not unhealthy. Honig at 56.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Id. at 57.
- ²⁴ Id. at 59.
- ²⁵ Id. at 62-63.
- ²⁶ Though Pessoa is hardly a household name in English speaking countries, he is idolized in Portugal. Harold Bloom cites him as “one of the twenty-six authors essential to the Western canon.” Jackson, op. cit. at 41.
- ²⁷ Honig at 124.

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Book Review

Me and Shakespeare: Adventures with the Bard. By Herman Gollob. (New York: Doubleday, 2002). 340 pages. \$26.

By **Richard F. Whalen**

Late in life, Herman Gollob, a book editor at major publishing houses, sets out to find Shakespeare. After retiring from Simon & Schuster, he reads the plays, absorbs the academic criticism, looks again at the movies he's seen, goes to his first ever stage performances, finds himself teaching Shakespeare to an adult education class at an obscure college, joins an Elderhostel trip to the Globe in London and Stratford-on-Avon, joins the Shakespeare Society, tours the Folger Shakespeare Library—and keeps bumping into the controversy over the author's identity.

Does it bother him? Not at all. Not even when the Folger's reference librarian selects one manuscript for him to study—a manuscript by Walt Whitman that includes his famous words (famous among Oxfordians) about one of the “wolfish earls” being the author of Shakespeare's history plays.

Gollob is a hyper-enthusiast. An academic's video lectures are a “euphoric marathon.” He becomes a “born-again believer” at Stratford, which evokes “a feeling of transcendence.” He picks up the outlandish suggestion of some Stratfordians that Will Shakspeare's education was “far superior to that offered to most university students today.”

Will's father, he says, “was every inch a self-made man,” as was Gollob's father, and nothing Gollob achieved meant anything unless it pleased his father. Gollob presents himself as a self-made man, too; and rather than finding Shakespeare he makes Will Shakspeare of Stratford into his own image, a common man who made himself a success in the world of letters.

His first encounter with the authorship controversy is in the audio tapes of Peter Saccio, who, according to Gollob, says that “the most extreme form of Bardolatry is to

say Shakespeare didn't exist” (a bizarre conceit) and then proceeds to dismiss the case for an alternative author. Strangely, Gollob calls it “provocative stuff, which made me hunger to know more about Shakespeare the man.” But not, it seems, to know more about the controversy.

He stumbles across references to Delia Bacon, one of the first to doubt that the Stratford man was the author, notes her descent into madness but recognizes that Nathaniel Hawthorne was “surprisingly sympathetic” to her.

Also provocative for him was what Walt Whitman said about Shakespeare's history plays. Even more intriguing for Oxfordians how it came about that he read it at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

He toured the Folger with Georgianna Ziegler, the reference librarian, whom he describes as “a delightful and ebullient young woman given to wry grins and a relaxed just-folks style that tempered the sense of awe generated in the temple.” She showed him several items in the stacks, including “a handwritten manuscript [sic] of an article by Walt Whitman that appeared in the *Critic*, 1884, advancing a provocative theory about Shakespeare's history plays.” She said to him: “If you'd like to take the time to read this carefully, I'll leave it at the desk in the reading room.”

The next day, Gollob perused the manuscript she had picked out for him to read. He transcribed portions of it, including the section:

...the English historical plays [form] the chief in a complexity of puzzles conceived out of the fullest heat and pulse of European feudalism—personifying in unparalleled ways the medieval aristocracy, its towering spirit of ruthless and gigantic caste, with its own peculiar air and arrogance—only one of the wolfish earls so plenteous in the plays themselves, or some born descendent and knower might seem to be the true author of these amazing works.

Amazing, too, that Ziegler would pick

Whitman's manuscript from among all the Folger's documents for Gollob to study, almost as if to lead him to the authorship controversy as embraced by, of all people, America's poet of the common man.

Gollob then finds a brief mention of “democracy” which he concedes is in a passage that is “a bit convoluted.” His only comment: “Old Walt might have been on to something, I thought, even if he was straining to discern a democratic vista in the Man from Stratford.”

Like many other Stratfordian born-again believers, Gollob only sees what he wants to see, not even wondering why the Folger's reference librarian selected Walt Whitman's provocative manuscript on “one of the wolfish earls” for him to peruse.

Department of Amplification

In a review of *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* and other “companion” volumes (Spring 2002), I regretted that *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, one of the most valuable reference books, was out of print. It is back in print in soft cover and less than \$15 on the online bookstores run by Amazon and Barnes & Noble. A fantastic bargain. The publisher is Fine Communications of New York City, which apparently has bought the rights from Thomas E. Crowell Company, the original publisher.

In the same review, I criticized Professor Russ McDonald's *Bedford Companion to Shakespeare* for making a number of errors about the authorship controversy. After several letters to him and to his partial credit, he has dropped from his second edition the ridiculous de Vere cipher code from a book by the obscure George Frisbee. (No Oxfordian has ever cited the book.) McDonald did not, however, remove other errors listed in the book review, and he has been reminded that he should do so for his third edition.

— Richard F. Whalen

A year in the life

By Hank Whittemore

1577: The Art of Navigation

The year 1577 was one of navigation, exploration and expanding boundaries for both England and Edward de Vere. The leap forward by explorers such as Martin Frobisher and Francis Drake was happening literally on the high seas while Oxford, taking keen interest in all such ventures, was navigating among the myriad elements of his personal life. In the previous year he had been compelled into a state of confusion, rage, solitude, soul searching, defiance and transformation. By virtue of an instinctively mature genius, Oxford at twenty-six had begun to transmute his immediate desire for revenge into what would become one of the most intensely sustained periods of creative artistry the world has known. This young earl who had been a brilliant, cultured, highly visible ornament of Her Majesty's Court was about to become a dangerous, political playwright dedicated to delivering "sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth"¹ from behind the scenes.

Having learned he could no longer cover his debts, and smarting from unscrupulous dealings at his expense, Oxford had returned from his Continental tour in April 1576 after barely escaping death at the hands of Dutch pirates in the English Channel. By then, it appears, he had learned about Court gossip that baby Elizabeth Vere, born in 1575 while he had been in Italy, was not his biological daughter. His father-in-law William Cecil, Lord Burghley, was furiously attempting to explain this scandal involving the reputation of his own daughter; and Queen Elizabeth had become irritated with Oxford, at least until she could hear his side of the story. The life he had known, prior to making his 15-month journey, was falling apart all around him.

He had rediscovered, with new visceral clarity, that the world of the Court was an illusion built upon deception and lies. Oxford bitterly stormed away from his marriage and London itself, to live on one of his entailed estates in Essex; and amid such solitude, most likely at Wivenhoe by the sea, he began to explore his inner turmoil to determine his course from here

on. During this self-imposed exile he decided to reconstruct the real world in the form of plays for the stage. In this way he would build his own world of illusion, mirroring the disloyalty and dishonesty of



Fig. 1
The title page to John Dee's 1577 limited edition publication, *General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Arte of Navigation*.

the Queen's own flatterers while conveying the truth of his personal life and moral vision as well.

Edward de Vere had absorbed much of the Italian Renaissance that he could now put to his own use at home. James Burbage had begun constructing England's first playhouse in Shoreditch, a mile north of Vere House; and we might wonder whether Oxford had sent back sketches of Italian amphitheatres as models. The new building was the Theatre, the first recorded use of that word. Soon a similar structure began to rise in a nearby neighborhood,

called Curtain Close; and with both the Theatre and the Curtain² operational in 1577, acting companies had these new venues to rehearse plays prior to performing them at Court.

The opening of this historic chapter of the Elizabethan drama, coming on the heels of Oxford's return from the Continent, coincided with his decision to put "all the world" on stage through the torrent of dramatic works attributed later to Shakespeare.

The year 1577 begins with the first of three plays, recorded as produced at Court, that Eva Turner Clark³ suggests as having come from his pen:

Jan 1: The Paul's Boys perform *The historie of Error*, possibly the first version of *The Comedy of Errors*, for the Queen and the Court at Hampton Palace. Oxford will be associated with this children's company through John Lyly, his personal secretary and stage manager, who is now living in Savoy apartments that the earl has probably begun to rent for him. Oxford may have written some of the *Comedy* during the late 1560s while enrolled at Gray's Inn. Some of the jests "show the author to be very familiar with some of the most abstruse proceedings in English jurisprudence," Chief Justice John Campbell of England wrote in 1859.⁴

It appears that Oxford glanced at his own recent past as a young lord of great wealth and even greater generosity, accustomed to merchants besieging him with attempts to help him spend his inherited fortune:

Some tender money to me, some invite me;
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;
Some offer me commodities to buy.
Even now a tailor called me in his shop,
And showed me silks that he had bought
for me,
And therewith took the measure of my
body. (4.3.4-9)

Within this play is also an apparent expression of the recent turmoil in regard to Oxford's marriage. He had written to Burghley on April 27, 1576, that "until I can better satisfy or advertise myself of

some mislikes, I am not determined, as touching my wife, to accompany her ... I mean not to weary my life any more with such troubles and molestations as I have endured." Agreeing that Anne Cecil should go live under her father's roof, he explained in anger that "there, as your daughter or her mother's more than my wife, you may take comfort of her, and I, rid of the cumber thereby, shall remain well eased of many griefs." All these arrangements, he raged, "might have been done through private conference before, and had not needed to have been the fable of the world if you would have had the patience to have understood me."⁵ In speeches of *Comedy* he expressed this anger over his private life having become "the fable of the world" through gossip at Court:

Herein you war against your reputation,
And draw within the compass of suspect
The unviolated honor of your wife...

For slander lives upon succession,
For ever housed where it once gets
possession. (3.1.86-8; 105-06)

Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all,
And art confederate with a damned pack
To make a loathsome abject scorn of me;
(4.4.101-03)

"*The Comedy of Errors*, it is agreed, is one of Shakespeare's very early plays," writes Harold Goddard, adding that nevertheless "few better farces have ever been written." The characters, confronted with strange occurrences, "keep declaring that they must be dreaming, that things are bewitched, that some sorcerer must be at work behind the scenes"—an apt description, it would seem, of Oxford's own feeling of new potency as an illusionist for the stage.⁶

Feb 17: *The Historie of the Solitarie knight*, performed at Whitehall by actors under Charles Howard of Effingham (the future Lord Admiral), is most likely the early version of *Timon of Athens*. Howard is deputy for Thomas Radcliffe, Third Earl of Sussex,⁷ the military leader and Oxford's great friend, who became Lord Chamberlain in 1572 and would continue in that crucial position until his death in 1583.

Timon, like Oxford, had lavished his wealth upon others:

I gave it freely ever, and there's none

Can truly say he gives if he receives...
Pray sit, more welcome are ye to my
fortunes
Than my fortunes to me.
(1.2.10-11,19-20)

But soon the servants of several creditors begin accosting him for payment of money owed to their masters. Oxford, writing to Burghley from Siena in January of 1576, had reacted to an identical situation. "My Lord, I am sorry to hear how hard my fortune is in England," he had opened this letter, referring to "the greatness of my debt and greediness of my creditors" that had grown so "dishonorable" to him. Shocked by the news of his sudden lack of funds, he had instructed Burghley to "sell one hundred pound a year more of my land where your Lordship shall think fittest."⁸

How goes the world, that I am thus
encountered
With clamorous demands of debt, broken
bonds,
And the detention of long since due debts,
Against my honor? (2.2.36-39)

Timon questions Flavius, his steward, who seems to represent one of Oxford's own devoted servants, probably Thomas Churchyard. But in the exchange we may hear the exact words Oxford and Burghley had spoken:

Timon: You make me marvel wherefore ere
this time
Had you not fully laid my state
before me,
That I might so have rated my
expense
As I had leave of means...

Flavius: O my good lord,
At many times I brought in my
accompts...
Prompted you in the ebb of your
estate
And your great flow of debts

Timon: Let all my land be sold!

Flavius: 'Tis all engaged, some forfeited and
gone,
And what remains will hardly stop
the mouth
Of present dues. The future comes
apace...
(2.2.124-145)

In the same letter Oxford had expressed surprise that "land of mine in Cornwall," which he had "appointed to be sold," was already "gone through withal." One can hear him referring to such land in this

exchange:

Timon: To Lacedaemon did my land
extend...
Flavius: How quickly it were gone!
(2.2.151-4)

After all his former friends refuse to give him a loan, Timon leaves Athens and goes to the depths of the woods, where he finds a cave and begins to live as a hermit:

Timon will to the woods, where he shall
find
Th'unkindest beast more kinder than
mankind. (4.1.35-36)

This is a transforming experience, however, and it leads to a final note of forgiveness and reconciliation. Near the end, although his idealism has turned sour and he still rejects the trappings of the world, Timon reasserts his patriotic spirit:

But yet I love my country, and am not
One that rejoices in the common wrack,
As common bruit doth put it.
(5.1.191-3)

Timon of Athens appears to be "the emotional twin of King Lear," Goddard writes, noting that the dramatist "seems to let himself go and to express through the mouth of Timon exactly what he thought and how he felt about humanity at some moment of mingled anger and disillusionment." When Timon finally digs in the earth for roots he ironically finds gold. But he "will use the treasure earth has yielded him, not to reinstate himself in Athens but to prove the universal corruptibility of man," adds Goddard, who may as well have been describing Oxford's decision to return to London and the Court with his plays. Timon is "a lover of truth," he continues, and "the play seems to say that such a man, though buried in the wilderness, is a better begetter of peace than all the instrumentalities of law in the hands of men who love neither truth nor justice."⁹

Feb 19: At Whitehall Palace the Paul's Boys perform *The historye of Titus and Gisippus*, perhaps the play to be known as *Titus Andronicus*. Clark suggests that Oxford hastily wrote this play in reaction to the massacre by Catholic fanatics called the Spanish Fury that devastated Antwerp on November 4, 1576. If so he was warning

(Continued on page 24)

Whittemore (continued from page 23)

England about such threats at home and “for the first time” intending “to serve his Queen and his country by means of the drama.”¹⁰ (Spies of Secretary Francis Walsingham, head of the Secret Service, are now unraveling a Catholic plot to invade England with 10,000 troops and depose Elizabeth, with Don John of Austria then marrying Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots and restoring Catholicism under their joint rule.¹¹)

The rape and mutilation of Lavinia may represent the unfortunate city of Antwerp and also what could happen to Elizabeth, but it is hard to resist the idea that Oxford is also expressing his terrible fear that Anne Cecil might have been the victim of sexual violence against her will.

“The play as a whole has a kind of passionate strength and vehemence that may well indicate it was the work of a genius just becoming aware of his capacities,” observes Goddard. But how, he wonders, could Shakespeare create *Titus* and then the far superior *Richard III* soon afterward in early 1590s? “Either *Titus Andronicus* was written earlier than is generally supposed,” he reasons, “or Shakespeare’s dramatic genius unfolded with incredible speed.”

May: The Queen, exasperated by Archbishop Edmund Grindal’s support of Puritans, tells him to prohibit “prophesyings”¹² within the Church, but he refuses. She places him under house arrest, suppressing his authority, and orders Burghley to command all bishops to ban any form of Puritan worship.¹³

May 26: Frobisher begins his second expedition¹⁴ to find a sea route along the northern coast of America to Cathay (China)—the fabled Northwest Passage. He has received navigational help from Dr. John Dee, the Queen’s astrologer, whom Oxford has known for at least several years. Frobisher leaves with a crew that includes miners and metallurgists focused on bringing back rich ore.¹⁵

June: Plague causes the Queen to cancel her summer progress.¹⁶

July: Kate Willoughby, the Puritan dowager Duchess of Suffolk, writes to Burghley that her son Peregrine Bertie has “gone very far” with Oxford’s sister Mary Vere by becoming engaged. “If she should prove like her brother,” the Duchess writes, “if an empire follows her I should be sorry

to match so.”¹⁷ Lady Mary told her she “could not rule her brother’s tongue, nor help the rest of his faults.”¹⁸

July: Burghley writes to Oxford and begs his son-in-law to forgive “your loving, faithful, and dutiful wife” who has “suffered the lack of your love, conversation and company” and whose “grief is the greater and shall always be inasmuch as her love is most fervent and addicted to you.”¹⁹

July 25: John Stanhope writes to Burghley that Oxford “giveth his diligent attention on Her Majesty, and earnestly laboureth his suit” for the Manor of Rysing. (The estate had been owned by the late Duke of Norfolk and had been confiscated by the Crown after his execution in 1572.) Elizabeth will convey Rysing (worth £250 a year) to Oxford in 1578 for unspecified “good, true, and faithful service” to her.²⁰

August: *General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Arte of Navigation*, by Dr. Dee, is published with 100 copies primarily for distribution at Court. The work is aimed at spurring English exploration, overseas trade and colonization in competition with Spain and Portugal (Stephanie Caruana and Elisabeth Sears suggest Oxford collaborated with Dee in the book’s writing and publication, and that he may have drawn the picture for its emblematic title page; see Fig. 2).²¹ This is “the first authoritative statement of the idea of a British Empire”²² and helps persuade the Queen and her nobles to support further voyages of exploration.

Sept 17: Frobisher returns and affirms with “great oaths” that his 200 tons of “rich ore” contain “precious stone, diamonds and rubies.” The material is locked up in Bristol Castle, with samples brought to the Tower of London for testing.²³

October: Merchant Michael Lok, treasurer of Frobisher’s mission, persuades Oxford to become an “adventurer” in the third expedition set for 1578. Ultimately the earl will sink 3,000 pounds as the largest single investor.²⁴ Dr. Dee will also join, apparently with Lok paying for his subscription.²⁵

Nov 11: “The marriage of the Lady Vere is deferred until after Christmas.”²⁶

Nov 25: German metallurgist Jonas Schutz writes to Walsingham at Windsor that he is ready to “finish the proof” about the value of Frobisher’s ore.²⁷ Then he reports that it’s all apparently worthless.

Dr. Dee will go to Tower Hill to make a definitive test.²⁸

Dec 13: Francis Drake, with heavy investments by the Queen and Sir Christopher Hatton, sets sail on his epic, three-year circumnavigation of the globe.

Dec 15: The Duchess of Suffolk writes to Burghley about a scheme for enabling Oxford to see two-year-old Elizabeth Vere.²⁹ She recounts telling Mary Vere: “I will see if I can get the child hither to me when you shall come hither, and whilst my Lord your brother is with you I will bring in the child as though it were some other child.” Then they might “see how nature will work in him to like it (the child) and tell him it is his own after.”

The Duchess also writes of Oxford: “I hear he is about to buy a house here in London about Watling Street, and not to continue a Courtier as he hath done.”³⁰

Dec 29: A play before the Queen by the Paul’s Boys may have been a version of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, which seems to reflect Oxford’s family strife. Particularly resonant is the father-daughter meeting of Pericles and Marina, possibly representing Oxford’s anticipation of meeting little Elizabeth Vere. (He actually may have met her this month at Burghley’s country home, since a household account book at Hatfield tells of him and Anne having “come from London to Theobalds” with “28 servants”—the latter, it would seem, not really servants but actors brought by Oxford.³¹)

Pericles would have caused no end of scandal, however, with its “riddle” of father-daughter incest possibly pointing at Burghley and Anne. The opening chorus tells about this other kind of rape of a female:

With whom the father liking took,
And her to incest did provoke.
Bad child, worse father, to entice his own
To evil should be done by none.
(Act One, Chorus, 25-28)

Lord Cerimon in *Pericles* appears to be Oxford, preferring honor and wisdom above his noble rank and wealth, blended with Dr. Dee, whose “secret art” of medicine extends to the knowledge of properties within “metals” and “stones”:

I hold it ever,
Virtue and cunning were endowments
greater
Than nobleness and riches...



Fig. 2

Reproduced from the cover of *Oxford's Revenge*

Fig. 3

Reproduced from B. W. Beckingsale's *Elizabeth I*

An interesting anomaly can be seen when comparing the original sketch (Fig. 2) used for the cover of *Arte of Navigation* and the engraving actually used on the title page (Fig. 3, based on the sketch). The sketch depicts a fourth individual wearing an oversized hat with a featured plume sticking out; but this fourth figure is absent from the published edition of *Arte* (Fig. 3). The image itself depicts Elizabeth at the helm of a ship identified as *Europe*; the three male figures attending her have been identified in B. W. Beckingsale's *Elizabeth I* as *Burghley*, *Leicester* and *Walsingham*. In their 1989 book *Oxford's Revenge* Elisabeth Sears and Stephanie Caruana had noted this anomaly and obtained a copy of the sketch for their book. They speculate that the "bonneted" and then later "disappeared" fourth figure is *Oxford*, known to have been in contact with *Dee* in the 1570s, and even that *Oxford* himself may have drawn the original sketch. One thing is clear: someone is depicted—in the sketch—in the august company of *Elizabeth* and her top advisors, and then—in the published version—disappears.

'Tis known I ever
Have studied physic, through which secret
art,

By turning o'er authorities, I have,
Together with my practice, made familiar
To me and to my aid the blest infusions
That dwells in vegetives, in metals, stones;
And can speak of the disturbances
That nature works, and of her cures; which
doth give me

A more content in course of true delight
Than to be thirsty after tottering honor,
Or tie my pleasure up in silken bags,
To please the fool and death.
(3.2.27-42)

Timon, *Titus* and *Pericles* are three "problem" plays in terms of attempts to fit them into the traditional chronology of composition, but within the framework of *Oxford's* life they make perfect sense as among his earliest efforts.

Upon his return from his European travels in 1575-1576 the Elizabethan Age had entered a new phase; and by the end of 1577, when the first volume of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* had just come off the printing press, the first phase of the Shakespearean Age was already begun.

Endnotes:

¹ *King John*, 1.1.213

² The Curtain was named for the neighborhood, not for theatre curtains, which were not in use. No one knows who built the Curtain, but it may have been Henry Lanman, who owned it in 1585.

³ Clark, Eva Turner, *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays* (First printed in 1930; Jennings, LA: Minos Publishing, 1974), pp 15-59.

⁴ Campbell, Lord John, *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements* (London, 1859), 45.

⁵ Fowler, William Plumer, *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters* (Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall), letter of April 27, 1576, p. 248.

⁶ Goddard, Harold, *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (University of Chicago Press, 1951); vol. 1, 25.

⁷ Clark, op. cit., 30, citing Chambers, Elizabethan Lord Chamberlains in the Malone Society Collections.

⁸ Fowler, op. cit., 203.

⁹ Goddard, op. cit., vol. 2, 172.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹¹ Weir, Alison, *The Life of Elizabeth I* (New York: Ballantine, 1998), 307.

¹² Propheysings comprised public forums in which the clergy discussed scripture and members of the laity asked questions, thereby allowing Puritan ministers to put forth their opinions. Read, Conyers, *Lord*

Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1960), 183.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 305.

¹⁴ The first Frobisher expedition was during May-Oct 1576.

¹⁵ Woolley, Benjamin, *The Queen's Conjurer* (New York: Henry Holt, 2001), 111.

¹⁶ Weir, op. cit., 307.

¹⁷ Peregrine, Lord Willoughby, will become *Oxford's* brother-in-law and friend. After a distinguished military career he will die in 1601 at age 46.

¹⁸ Ward, B.M., *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* (London: John Murray, 1928; reprint by Ruth Loyd Miller, Jennings, LA), 152.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 147-48.

²⁰ Ward, op. cit., 149.

²¹ Caruana, Stephanie, and Sears, Elisabeth, *Oxford's Revenge* (1989), 79.

²² Woolley, op. cit., 117.

²³ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁴ Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (MacLean, VA: EPM Publications, 1984; 1992 edition), 603.

²⁵ McDermott, James, *Martin Frobisher* (New Haven: Yale University, 2001), 205.

²⁶ Thomas Screven to the Earl of Rutland, Cal. Rutland MSS., I. 115; Ward, 153.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 111-12.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁹ Clark, op. cit., 61.

³⁰ Ward, op. cit., 154-56.

³¹ Clark, op. cit., 63.

Paradigm Shift

By Mark K. Anderson

More on Pierce Penniless

One time not so long ago, there was a scholar who presented a thesis that fingered Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford as a key player in a controversial book that had been written by another Elizabethan author. After others criticized the scholar for making such a connection, here is what she wrote:

As noted in my paper, there is evidence that the book carries a double entendre which serves as a safety device for the author. If he had been summoned to answer to a charge of libel, his defense might very well have taken the line which [my critic] takes [I]t is apparent that [my critic's] interpretation does not run counter to mine. The interpretations are not mutually exclusive. It is evident, also, that the author meant to offer the possibility of two interpretations. He himself admits that under the smooth surface he presents are rough implications, for which, however, he cannot be held accountable This in itself bears witness to the fact that readers of that day gave to the book an interpretation far from innocent. Its suppression by the censors is further evidence in the same direction. Nor do I stand alone among modern readers in considering it libelous My contribution is simply an analysis of the text to discover the nature of the libel.

These words, written in 1940 by Pauline K. Angell in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*¹, are about a tempest in a teapot that emerged when Angell introduced a novel—and Oxfordian tinged—interpretation of the 1594 book *Willobie His Avis* to PMLA readers. Her subsequent critics instead sought to impose a stringent either/or framework on *Willobie*, a text that they knew was fraught with controversy and double meanings. Angell, on the other hand, recognized the utility of her critics' findings and further strengthened her interpretation by incorporating them into her original thesis.

The simple fact that *Willobie* was censored after publication suggests that the original author, if he had any sense, would

have recognized the controversial nature of his subject matter and would probably have introduced a host of evasive tricks to afford him plausible deniability should he ever face the chopping block for what he

“Angell, on the other hand, recognized the utility of her critics' findings and further strengthened her interpretation by incorporating them into her original thesis.”

had written.

This is precisely the situation that the pamphleteer Gabriel Harvey faced when he wrote his response to Thomas Nashe's *Strange News* (1592)—the latter of which, as Charles Wisner Barrell has shown in a landmark 1944 paper that has never been refuted², was dedicated to Edward de Vere, a.k.a. “Gentle Master William.” Harvey's response was titled *Pierce's Supererogation*, and it too contains revelations about de Vere's emerging enterprise to foist his poem *Venus and Adonis* off on a gullible public under the assumed personage of “William Shakespeare.” Some of these revelations Roger Stritmatter and I discussed in a previous column—one which has already occasioned my response³ to a first round of criticism presented by the Stratfordian fidei defensor Terry Ross.

In that response, as well as in the original column⁴, I pointed out that both time and column inches allowed only for a discussion of a fraction of the argument that

has been patiently assembled by Elizabeth Appleton van Dreunen in her 2001 opus of a book, *An Anatomy of the Marprelate Controversy*.⁵ And *Anatomy* is only the first in what I'm sure will, within a generation's time, be a bookshelf's worth of analysis and commentary on Harvey, Nashe and their potent testimony about Edward de Vere, a.k.a. “Shakespeare.”

Last June, a second barrage of criticisms of the *Pierce's Supererogation* thesis appeared, this time by Oxfordian fidei defensor Nina Green on her Internet discussion group Phaeton. I have held off from responding to date in hopes that someone would write an article or letter to the editor for *Shakespeare Matters* so that these objections could be put on the record. Since no one has, I will do my best in the space below to present Green's clarifications and corrections in these pages as well as respond to them.

However, before getting lost in the details, as one inevitably does in the Harvey/Nashe pamphlet war, it's important to recall why any of the present controversy might possibly matter to the larger Oxfordian debate:

A) For reasons spelled out in previous columns and in 23 points laid out in Appleton van Dreunen's book (pp. 222-24), the nickname “Pierce Penniless” was sometimes used in both Harvey's and Nashe's rhetoric to mean “Edward de Vere.”

B) For reasons spelled out in previous columns and in van Dreunen's book (pp. 225-32, 365-68), “Pierce Penniless” is a character associated with—and arguably equated to—the then emerging pseudonymous figure of “William Shakespeare.”

C) Here's where the shouting is heard. For reasons outlined in the quote earlier in this article, Harvey and Nashe hedge most every bet that they place. For the simple motive of survival, their rhetoric is often serpentine and filled with double and triple meanings. And Harvey especially, who probably couldn't write a concise paragraph if he were given an entire lifetime to

do so, becomes a problematic witness when one tries to extract unambiguous statements from him.

Green and Ross, in their lengthy responses, have provided substance to point C), in the process adding important caveats to points A) and B). In that sense, any comprehensive “proof” of de Vere’s authorship of Shakespeare based only on the above would probably resemble that of Fermat’s Last Theorem more than the simplistic one page PDF file advertised in this space one year ago.

I would urge anyone trying to make headway in discovering de Vere’s complex relation to the Nashe/Harvey debate to consider the previously advertised proof as a thumbnail sketch of an elaborate mural which contains many extra—and sometimes extraneous—details. What follows are my summaries of and responses to those details that Green pointed out in her Phaeton postings last June (2002)⁶:

Point A

Green notes that it is untrue, as this column claimed, that Nashe was mentioned in the letters surrounding the rental fiasco involving the poetaster Thomas Churchyard and his landlady Juliann Penn. (De Vere had evidently agreed to rent a room for Churchyard and/or Nashe but had skipped out on paying the rent.) Green is, so far as I can determine, correct here. The original source for my claim, footnote 16 of Charles Wisner Barrell’s 1944 article on “Gentle Master William”⁷, also gets it right. Barrell says that it is from Harvey’s and Nashe’s own writings, not from any third party documents, that one finds an association between Nashe and the Churchyard fiasco. The mistake was wholly mine.

Here is what Barrell wrote in 1944: “According to Harvey’s taunts in *Four Letters* as well as [Nashe’s] own admissions in *Strange News*, [Nashe] served a term in the debtors’ prison—the Counter in Poultry Street—as a direct result of the acceptance of Lord Oxford’s ‘hospitalitie’ and the unlawful enjoyment of Mrs. Penn’s ‘coals, billets, faggots, beer, wine ... napery and linen.’”

Nevertheless, the point is academic. The reason it’s relevant is that Harvey’s

allusion to the Churchyard fiasco in his pamphlet *Four Letters* suggests that the figure he speaks of as “Penniless” is the one who sponsored Churchyard—i.e. de Vere. Green writes, “There is really nothing which can be said about this other than that it’s an impossible reading. The sentence doesn’t make the slightest bit of sense when Oxford is substituted for ‘Pennliess.’”⁶

Actually, it’s the only coherent interpretation of Harvey’s words yet put for-

***“There is a
reason why,
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years after Harvey
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scholars still
haven’t figured
out what
they’re saying.”***

ward.^{3,4} Green offers no sensible alternative of her own—other than supposing “some episode” involving the landlady along with Nashe wanting to apologize for “some reason or another.”

Point B

Green also raises two other caveats. In both cases, I do not dispute the facts she presents. Indeed, I thank her for raising them. I only dispute the either/or spin she puts on them—as if establishing one interpretation of a passage necessarily excludes all others. (Is it really so controversial to suggest that a literary text could have more than one meaning?)

She points out that that the “rich mummer” (i.e., player) that Harvey promises to unmask in *Pierce’s Supererogation* was probably inspired by Dr. Andrew Perne—since the comment appears in the context of a diatribe against Perne.

She also notes that Harvey’s sarcasm, which is hardly subtle, pervades another

“Pierce Penniless” allusion—one which speaks of Pierce’s “miraculous perfections” being “still in abeyance and his monstrous excellencies in the predicament of Chimera.” She claims that because Harvey’s “miraculous perfections” are actually a list of vices (such as a “great store of little discretion” and “filthiest corruption of abominable villainy”) that they could not be about de Vere. Again, Harvey—whose ambivalence about de Vere and his writings ranges from praise to moralistic outrage—could not accuse de Vere by name of any such vices. But this is why the veil of “Pierce” gives Harvey room to breathe. Yes, he’s partly speaking about Nashe. And if hauled before the Privy Council to answer for his libels, this would undoubtedly have been his defense. But he’s also speaking about de Vere and his “miraculous perfections” that in early 1593 when he wrote *Pierce’s Supererogation* were indeed “still in abeyance.”

This is where the quote that began this column should be revisited. Just as Ross pointed out important alternate readings of Harvey’s rhetoric, Green has also revealed the pedant’s plausible deniability. But, as Angell wrote more than 60 years ago, this “interpretation does not run counter to mine. The interpretations are not mutually exclusive.”

There is a reason why, more than 400 years after Harvey and Nashe’s words first appeared, scholars still haven’t figured out what they’re saying. Like Shakespeare, they were trafficking in some pretty big state secrets. Unlike Shakespeare, however, they had no title, office, power or state sanction to say what they were saying. Naturally, as they were not eager to be tortured, thrown in prison, or to wake up dead one fine morning, they masked their words in double and triple meanings. And yet, even with all their evasions, they were still subject to one of the most extreme censorship campaigns in all of Elizabeth’s 45-year reign.

In June of 1599, Archbishop John Whitgift issued a decree banning works by a number of controversial writers (interestingly enough, though, Shakespeare’s writings go unmentioned). This proclamation included the following statement: “That all Nashe’s books and Doctor

(Continued on page 28)

Anderson (continued from page 27)

Harvey's books be taken wheresoever they may be found and that none of their books be ever printed hereafter."⁸

Clearly, Harvey and Nashe were offending some powerful people about something of great significance. If the Shakespeare canon is half as offensive and compromising to the Elizabethan power structure as Oxfordians claim it is, then look no further. The reason Shakespeare wasn't banned is probably that the Shakespeare problem had already been solved by 1599. However, the solution required that no Nashes or Harveys could be around to spill the beans about who actually wrote what and what those writings *actually meant*.

In the end, though, Harvey's and Nashe's words are not as revelatory as I'd first appreciated, because they are also so carefully hedged. The argument for Harvey's and Nashe's full disclosure of the Shakespeare secret cannot be made like so much fast food. One page "proofs," I can now safely say, cannot be written without plenty of asterisks.

Green closes one of her notes with the following plea—one with which I heartily concur: "Please, fellow Oxfordians, read Harvey's *Pierce's Supererogation* so that you can put these arguments of Anderson and Stritmatter's into context. The tract is available in a modern spelling version on my website at www3.telus.net/oxford."

And upon downloading the PDF, I ask that the reader peruse two passages: The last few sentences of *Pierce's Supererogation* and the epistle dedication to *Venus and Adonis*. The former is dated April 27, 1593. The latter was registered "under the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury" on April 18, 1593.

As for the rest, I leave it to the reader's idle hours.

Works cited:

1. *PMLA* 55:2 (June 1940) 601-02; original paper: Pauline K. Angell, "Light on the Dark Lady" *PMLA* 52:3 (Sep. 1937) 652-74.
2. Charles Wisner Barrell, "New Milestone in Shakespearean Research" *Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly* 5:4 (October 1944)

49-66; online at: <http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/barrellintro.htm>.

3. Mark K. Anderson, "Ross's Supererogation." *Shakespeare Matters* 1:3 (Spring 2002) 28-31.
4. Mark K. Anderson and Roger Stritmatter, "The Potent Testimony of Gabriel Harvey." *Shakespeare Matters* 1:2 (Winter 2002) 26-29.
5. Elizabeth Appleton van Dreunen, *An Anatomy of the Marprelate Controversy 1588-1596: Retracing Shakespeare's Identity and That of Martin Marprelate*. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, N.Y. (2001).
6. Nina Green, Phaeton email postings dated June 24 and June 26, 2002.
7. Barrell, op. cit. 5961; online at http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/BarrelMain.htm#_edn16.
8. Reprinted with discussion in Richard A. McCabe, "Elizabethan Satire and the Bishops' Ban of 1599." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 2 (1981) 188-93.

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Research Notes

“Wounded Truth” — some further thoughts

By Charles J. Bird

Carl S. Caruso’s thought-provoking article “The Maiden and the Mermaid,” (*Shakespeare Matters*, Summer 2002) raises questions on the identity of the female figure in the “Wounded Truth” cartouche employed by the printer and publisher Thomas Creede to ornament many of his publications, and which some (including myself) believe may owe its origins to Edward de Vere. It is worth clarifying exactly who this figure is, and indeed why it was used so frequently, as it bears all the hallmarks of the immortality theme, an age-old story connected with the renewal of the Earth in the springtime after the desolation of winter. Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*,¹ tells us the tale most vividly, though it is just a reworking of a fable originating long before the Greek and Roman pantheons of gods and goddesses:

Not far from Henna’s walls, there is a deep lake, ...there it is always spring. In this glade Proserpine was playing, picking violets or shining lilies. Almost at one and the same time Pluto (the King of Hades), saw her and loved her, and bore her off, so swift is love. Proserpine’s mother Ceres, great mother of the corn crops, now with panic in her heart, vainly sought her daughter over all lands and over the sea. Eventually, she met the nymph Arethusa of Elis who told her that while passing by the Stygian pool beneath the earth, she had seen Proserpine. She was sad, certainly, and her face still showed signs of fear: nonetheless, she was a queen, the greatest in that world of shadows, the powerful consort of the tyrant of the underworld.

Ceres (the Greek Demeter), complained about the behavior of Pluto to the all-powerful Jupiter, who decreed that the goddess should spend part of the year with her husband (a period that Greek mythology came to equate with winter); and part with her mother in the land of the living, that became synonymous with spring and summer. The abduction of Proserpine is echoed quite unmistakably in Creede’s cartouche, as readers can see for themselves. Although the illustration is rather small, it has been executed with great care:

Firstly, the female figure is emerging

from the lower regions as is evidenced by the two levels of the horizon which forms part of the landscape background. Secondly, as Queen of the Underworld she wears the crown which identifies her as Pluto’s consort, bearing in her hands two kernels or cobs of corn that are her attributes as the daughter of Demeter/Ceres. Thirdly, her long golden tresses, like the ripened corn, are part of the same theme. Finally, Proserpine, Janus-like, wears a mask showing two faces—one of almost theatrical sadness, the other showing a more cheerful forward-looking countenance which Ovid goes on to describe:

Her expression and her temperament change instantly: at one moment she is so melancholy as to seem sad to Dis himself; the next, she appears with radiant face, as when the sun breaks through and disperses the watery clouds that have previously concealed him.

The hand emerging from, and dispersing, the clouds I take to be that of Ceres herself, grasping not a scourge but the sheaf of corn which is her symbol, and from which Proserpine has plucked the grain that she now carries to sow upon Earth. The flowers that appear in the strapwork may be an echo of those the goddess was collecting when she was carried off. But there is one important divergence between the cartouche and Ovid’s version of the abduction and rape of Proserpine, which is that the woman is looking backwards over her right shoulder, to the shadows from which she has just come.

Two acts are forbidden in the ancient myths of the Underworld known from Greece as well as India and Japan. First, if you want to exit hell, you must not look back. The other offense which Proserpine committed was to eat of the food of Hades, and only by the benevolence of Zeus was she allowed to escape for the season of spring. Orpheus had the same conditions imposed upon him when he journeyed to the realm of the dead to rescue his wife, Eurydice. Forgetfully he turned to embrace her as they departed, whereupon she immediately disappeared.

As Ovid does not mention the act of looking back in connection with

Proserpine, the originator of the Creede cartouche must have obtained the idea from somewhere else; probably from the fable of Orpheus and Eurydice in which the music of Orpheus so charmed Persephone that she permitted him to leave her realm.

Once we accept the attribution of the female figure as Persephone/Proserpine, the Latin proverb surrounding the device assumes the character of a comment on both Edward de Vere and Persephone. “Truth Flourishes Though Wounded” (my translation), certainly applies as a metaphor for Persephone, whom the Greeks regarded as the very personification of spring, “ver,” which also (as Caruso points out) is the Latin root for truth. This interpretation is supported by a 1622 print showing the late Queen Elizabeth being handed a lance or spear by Persephone standing wreathed in flames at the door of Hades entitled “Truth presents the Queen with a lance.”² This image of Persephone appears to be taken from the then newly completed marble sculpture by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, now in the Borghese Gallery, Rome.

The Creede/Oxford ideogram speaks to us of spring, and affords a very interesting explanation on the use of Persephone in the context of the authorship controversy. I feel she is intended to represent de Vere in both illustrations. And like “spring,” we are promised, its namesake “truth,” can never be vanquished for long. Oxfordians have long recognized that as electricity is to magnetism, so spring and truth are to Vere. Looked at in this light, if you want to reveal de Vere surreptitiously, the picture is a neat way to do it. Maybe it all looks a bit clunky 400 years on, but Thomas Creede’s clientele surely had the mental and cultural tools to de-code both the symbolism of the engraving and its dangerous intent.

Endnotes:

1. Text adapted from *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*. Penguin Classics. Translated by Mary M. Innes 1955.
2. *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*. Julia M. Walker (ed.). Duke University Press, 1998. And see also the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* Vol. 36: no.2 (Summer 2000), page 19.

Charles J. Bird lives in England at Castle Hedingham and contributes regularly to Oxfordian publications.

*Authorship in the Media**Much Ado about Something* airs on PBS

The new year began on yet another interesting authorship note as the Public Broadcasting System's *Frontline* aired Michael Rubbo's 90-minute documentary *Much Ado About Something* on Christopher Marlowe as Shakespeare. The film, which had a commercial theatrical release last year and received generally positive reviews, is an interesting amalgam of anti-Stratfordian arguments and a murder mystery. *Frontline*, of course, is the series which aired Al Austin's landmark *The Shakespeare Mystery* in 1989. In the opening moments of the Marlowe show they did harken back to *The Shakespeare Mystery*—with brief glimpses of Charlton Ogburn and Charles Burford—to remind viewers about the Oxfordian thesis before exploring the Marlowe story.

For Oxfordians who viewed this film the general consensus afterwards was "Where's the beef?" since what is considered the most significant circumstantial evidence in favor of Oxford as the true Shakespeare—the fit between the author's known life and the plays and poems—is really absent from the Marlovian argument. There seemed to be more emphasis in the documentary on the 1593 murder mystery about *how* Marlowe *could have* become Shakespeare than on the more important question of *why* Marlowe *would have* become Shakespeare and written the body of works we have today.

One familiar face in the film was Marlovian John Baker, who has attended several De Vere Studies Conferences in Portland, Oregon (he lives in nearby Washington) and whose essay on Shakespeare's moral philosophy was published in the Winter 2002 *Shakespeare Matters*. Several well-known Stratfordians—Stanley Wells and Jonathan Bate—were also part of the show. As occurred 13 years ago in *The Shakespeare Mystery*, the Stratfordian defenders became their own worst enemies, with explanations about life and art that never quite seemed to resonate, especially when coupled with the "commercial" Stratford story and the well-documented humdrum of William of Stratford's life.

Frontline also created an excellent companion website for *Much Ado About Something* (www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/muchado/), including a discussion forum and interviews with four key players in the film and the authorship debate: Michael Rubbo, the film's producer, Prof. Jonathan Bate of the University of Liverpool (who appears in the film),

"There seemed to be more emphasis in the documentary on the 1593 murder mystery about how Marlowe could have become Shakespeare than on the more important question of why Marlowe would have become Shakespeare."

Diana Price (anti-Stratfordian author of *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*) and Prof. Marjorie Garber of Harvard. On this website there appear some interesting and telling comments about the state of the authorship debate, circa 2003.

Rubbo's comments about the nature of the debate (which he had only recently entered) are right on the mark: "...whenever the Stratfordians get going, they tend to not review the arguments that are made against Shakespeare [i.e. Stratford], but to question the motives of the attackers ... so it's always 'shoot the messenger.'"

Diana Price's statement that the [authorship question] is "sort of a vicious circle, because the academic community does not accept the authorship as a legitimate question" echoes Rubbo's comments. And that is why, Price explains, "...what I am trying to do is play by their rules and

earn their respect and make it difficult for them to just flick it [the authorship question] aside."

On the other side of the debate are Prof. Bate and Prof. Garber. Bate states unequivocally that [the authorship] "is not a legitimate debate at all, because it's entirely dependent on evidence that isn't there, it's entirely a conspiracy theory ... the whole debate really stems from a profound ignorance about the nature of the literary and dramatic culture of the time." (For some Oxfordian thoughts about Prof. Bate's authorship views, see Roger Stritmatter's essay on pages 12-13 of this issue).

Finally there is Harvard's Prof. Garber, who takes a much different tack from Bate. "It's perfectly understandable," she writes, "that people would take an author who is so central to our cultural understanding of what human nature is supposedly like ... and try to bring him down to size, usually their own size." She continues, "What's at stake more seriously, maybe ... is why we study literature."

Later in the interview, however, we find a remarkable comment from Garber about what studying Shakespearean literature—in her view at least—is really all about. She is responding to the question ("you say [in *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers*] that a great deal is invested in *not* finding an answer as to who wrote the plays"):

Well, Shakespeare seems to be a figure who transcends the possibility of authorship ... And there's almost a kind of secular religion of Shakespeare that wants to quote these texts as if they were a kind of Bible of human nature, and that wants to understand Shakespeare as—you know, the famous portrait of Shakespeare with the high forehead, as if he were a mind, as if he were an intelligence looking into our prettier lives and understanding them beyond some way that we could.

If Shakespeare's brought down to size, in a way, to scale and is made to be subject to the ordinary pressures of his time, or of any time, then we lose that sense of the all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful Shakespeare, about which again, poets have written from Matthew Arnold's sonnet on: that desire to imagine that Shakespeare knows us better than we know ourselves. And that kind of numinousness, and that kind of transcendence, is not commensurate with

any too-intimate knowledge. So in order to keep the ideal of Shakespeare as the playwright beyond play writing—the author beyond authorship, the poet who knows all—we need in a way, *not* to know him. The best way to know him is, in a way, not to know him.

This statement is reminiscent of what Folger Shakespeare Library director Gail Kern Paster said in the Smithsonian sponsored debate in Washington, DC last winter (2002), i.e. that Oxfordians have some sort of personal problem in coping with the genius and stature of Shakespeare and are in some way trying to bring him down to their level.

But of course what Garber's comments really go to is the very real heart of the authorship debate, which is not about size or stature, but rather about truth and reality. The authorship debate has always been driven by the well-documented problems surrounding the vacuous, iconized, *unknown* "Shakespeare of Stratford." It is safe to say that all those engaged in the authorship debate (whoever they think the true Shakespeare was) have in common a core belief that *knowing* the truth about how and why these works were created clarifies and enriches them—in the end rewarding us all.

—WBoyle

Video Bard will return in our next issue with a look at film and video productions of King Lear.

Quotes of note

In the course of getting each issue of the newsletter ready to print, a number of loose ends and small items wind up on the cutting room floor. We'll try from time to time to find the space to cite these quotes.

First, in the Jan./Feb. 2001 issue of *Book*, Prof. Donald Foster is quoted (speaking about his involvement in criminal investigations): "In literary studies, you don't have to be right about anything. You just have to make a clever argument ... In literary studies, it doesn't really matter too much who the correct author is." Just a year after this remark Foster was disowning his attribution of *Funeral Elegy* to Shakespeare. Case closed.

Meanwhile, on a new website (www.willyshakes.com) author Irvin Matus, in an article blasting *The New York Times* for William Niederkorn's Feb. 10, 2002, article, complains about the Oxfordian Dating Game. He quotes from Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*: "Proof is wholly lacking that any of Shakespeare's plays were written after 1604."

"A good debating tactic," writes Matus, "which diverts attention from the fact they offer no proof whatsoever that even one of these plays was written before 1604."

We're not quite sure what to say about this remark. Letters to the editor are welcome if you can decipher it.

Shakespeare's Fingerprints

As Oxfordian Mark Alexander likes to say sometimes, when posting authorship news on various Internet discussion forums, "More bad news for Stratfordians."

This time it's the announcement of "The Fingerprint Trilogy" by University of Washington professors Michael Brame (Dept. of Linguistics) and Galina Popova (Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literature). The two have compiled ten years of work into three books (all published in 2002) that make a persuasive case for Edward de Vere as Shakespeare (*Shakespeare's Fingerprints*, *Adventures of Freeman Jones*, and *Never and For Ever*).

The professors, both experts in linguistics, have concluded that the linguistic and real life comparisons between de Vere's writing and life and the Shakespeare works are conclusive: de Vere was Shakespeare. They also make the case for de Vere having written much else under other names or pseudonyms for the purpose of improving and refining the English language.

We will review *Shakespeare's Fingerprints* in our next issue, and report on the Brame/Popova presentation scheduled for the Edward de Vere Studies Conference in Portland this spring. To learn more about their work (and/or to order any of the three books), go to www.adonis-editions.com on the Internet.

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Smithsonian once again takes on authorship debate

The Smithsonian Museum's Resident Associates Program will present an all-day authorship Seminar in Washington, DC on Saturday, April 19th, 2003. The Seminar ("Shakespeare or De Vere? - That is the Question") will feature several different panel discussions and presentations. The Seminar has been organized by Washington attorney William F. Causey, who also organized the Jan. 2002 debate between Folger Shakespeare Library director Gail Kern Paster and Richard Whalen (author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?*).

Seminar participants include Stratfordians Irvin Matus (author of *Shakespeare, In Fact*), Prof. Alan Nelson (whose Oxford biography *Monstrous Adversary* will be published this spring) and Steven W. May of Georgetown University (author, *Elizabethan Courtier Poets*). They will be challenged by Washington-area Oxfordian Ron Hess (author, *Dark Side of Shakespeare*), Shakespeare Oxford Society Board member Katherine Chiljan (editor, *Letters and Poems of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford*) and Joseph Sobran (author, *Alias Shakespeare*). Diana Price (author, *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*) will open the seminar with an overview of the authorship question.

Tickets are available through the Smithsonian Associates Residents web site (<http://residentassociates.si.edu>) or by phone (202-357-3030).

2003 Fellowship Conference in Carmel

The Shakespeare Fellowship's 2nd Annual Conference will be held October 9th to 12th in Carmel, California, home of the Carmel Shakespeare Festival, managed by Oxfordian Stephen Moorer. The Festival has been presenting all Shakespeare's history plays since 2001 (under the series title "Royal Blood"), and on tap for this fall will be *Henry VI (Parts I and II)*. Also on the fall schedule is *Taming of the Shrew*. Tickets for all three will be available to conference attendees. Some programs and papers will focus on the history plays in general and these plays in particular.

Carmel has hosted Oxfordian events in

the past, and it is expected that this conference will be an exciting event for all involved.

For those interested in presenting papers, this year's contacts are Dr. Roger Stritmatter (stritmatter24@hotmail.com) and Lynne Kositsky (kositsky@ican.net). Papers on all topics are welcome, but it is hoped that some emphasis can be placed on the history plays, with particular focus on how and why Oxford/Shakespeare choose to write this cycle of history plays.

For general information about the conference, contact Fellowship President Chuck Berney (cvberney@rcn.com).

Edward de Vere Studies Conference

April 10th to 13th, Concordia University, Portland, OR

Speakers will include Professors Michael Brame and Galina Popova, Dr. Michael Delahoyde, Dr. Roger Stritmatter, Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, Andrew Werth, Prof. William Rubinstein, Peter Dickson, Carole Sue Lipman, Barbara Burris, Prof. Matthew Becker, Dr. Paul Altrocchi, Marlovian John Baker, Prof. Ren Draya, Dr. Sarah Smith, Dr. Merilee Karr, Dr. Daniel Wright and others.

Full Registration: \$165.00 (includes Saturday Banquet)

Registration without Banquet: \$115.00

website: www.deverestudies.org

email: dwright@cu-portland.edu

Mail: Dr. Daniel Wright, Dept. of Humanities, 2811 NE Holman,
Concordia University, Portland, OR 97211-6099

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