



# Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice  
of the  
Shakespeare  
Fellowship"

7:4

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

Fall 2008

## "Seventeen Fat Oxen": Sidney's *Arcadia* and the Authorship Question

by Thomas Hurst

Just how much bawdiness can be inserted into a description of tilting, can be seen in Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, when Dorus, the Prince Musidorus in disguise, organizes a show of horsemanship to impress his natural nobility upon Princess Pamela. Reports Pamela of the joust:

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## Edward de Vere's Hand in *Titus Andronicus*: The Play as Primer

by Ren Draya, PhD

Professor Michael Delahoyde and I are fans of that bloody, violent, cannibalistic *Titus Andronicus*. Our hope is not to turn you all into lovers of this gory drama, but to point out its strong features and its links to Edward de Vere, rightful author. I wish to stress that the play is, in fact, a kind of primer.

If you ask people, "What did Shakespeare write?" most everyone can reel off titles such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet*. Ev-

(Cont. on p. 2)

Paper presented at the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, Concordia University-Portland, on April 4, 2008.



## *Coriolanus* and Edward de Vere: Another Good Reason to Be An Oxfordian

by William Farina

One of the beauties of the Oxfordian theory is that it brings to life about two-thirds of the canon otherwise tending to be ignored; *Coriolanus* is a perfect example of this. You don't see or hear of it too often, although most established companies put on the obligatory performance at least once. There have been only two filmed versions to my knowledge, the BBC production from 1983 and another from 1979 featuring a young Morgan Freeman in the title role. The best production I have witnessed, however, was a few years ago in Healdsburg, California, with an all-female cast. It was quite convincing. Shakespeare is one of the few playwrights for which this sort of thing can be done because his characterizations are so complex, and tend to cut across conventional lines of gender and race.

*Coriolanus*, like *Timon of Athens* and a number of other plays, made its first printed appearance in the First Folio of 1623, and had it not been for this publication, no one would have a clue that the play ever existed. Prior to 1623, there are no documented performances and no direct references to it. Edmund Chambers, before assigning a tentative date around 1607-1608, made the following observation:

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Paper presented at the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, Concordia University-Portland, on April 6, 2008.

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

everyone, it seems, has heard of *Romeo and Juliet*! Tragic, fated young love is assigned for high school classes across the country. And, yes, the play can capture the interest of young readers and provide them with an entree into a world that may have previously seemed intimidating, intellectual. But what of *Titus*? Among the general public, there is virtually no recognition of or familiarity with the play called *Titus Andronicus*. College students shrug their shoulders (despite Anthony Hopkins' brilliant portrayal on film), and many scholars simply avoid mentioning the play. Nor is it frequently staged.

Professor Delahoyde and I are not saying that *Titus Andronicus* is an excellent play or that it is a better play than, say, *Hamlet*. But we do say that *Titus Andronicus* provides a primer for Shakespearean themes and that the play gives clear evidence of Oxford's authorship.

*Titus Andronicus*, in 1594, was the earliest printed Shakespearean play. Its title page supplies no author's name, and reads "The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus: As it was Plaide by the Right Honourable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembroke, and Earl of Sussex. . . London, printed by John Danter." Each of the acting companies of these earls had included *Titus* in their repertoires, and, based on this 1594 printing, editors and directors have assumed a 1593 or 1594 date of composition. However, writing in the *De Vere Society Newsletter* of July 2001, David Roper notes Ben Jonson's 1614 statement in his introduction to *Bartholomew's Fair*:

Heronimo [the popular name for Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* or *Andronicus* are the best playes . . . and hath stood still [remained in public appreciation] these five and twentie, or thirtie years . . .

"Five and twenty or thirty years"! Doing the arithmetic, we quickly realize that *Titus Andronicus* had initially been staged sometime between 1584 and 1589. These dates mean that Stratford authorship is highly unlikely, for at the beginning of 1585, Shakspeare was only twenty years

old, recently wed, with three children. It is safe to say that he was not hanging out with the Earls of Derby, Pembroke, and Sussex. Thus, the first link to Oxford – and it's an important one – is its probable date of composition and this evidence of staging some six or ten years earlier than the 1594 printing. Ben Jonson's comment is not unknown to Stratfordians, but they either ignore or discount it. For example, Jonathan Bate goes to great lengths to establish the date of composition as 1593 or early 1594. Bate dismisses Jonson's twenty-five to thirty years' remark as "exaggeration."

The next link between *Titus Andronicus* and de Vere is a basic one. Oxford was clearly obsessed with familial themes: harsh fathers, absent mothers, grieving siblings; loving fathers, angelic mothers, separated siblings – the list of family permutations goes on and on, and can be illustrated by just about any play in the canon. Consider that crowd-pleaser *Romeo and Juliet* in comparison with *Titus Andronicus*. In both plays, the central conflict springs from two family groupings, the Montagues and the Capulets (also known as the Jets and the Sharks); or the Andronicus family and the combined household of

Saturninus/Tamora/Aaron. In both plays, the conflict threatens the civil peace of an entire state: the fair city of Verona or the world of Rome. And for the citizens of each, that city is their world. As Romeo laments upon hearing of his banishment, "There is no world without Verona walls" (3,.3.17). Similarly, the single place, Rome is for the Andronici their world. At the center of the city stands the family; and at the center of the Andronici's sense of themselves we see the one object they most respect: the family tomb. In both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Titus Andronicus*, the family tomb dominates as symbol and as practical plot element. As G.K. Hunter states:

The presence of the tomb assures us that the extreme acts of tragic individuals contribute to the past and future as well as to the brilliant present. . . . In both plays a woman as well as a man is placed in the tomb at the end of the action. (8)

*Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet* both open with a compelling display of competing powers and with the demonstra-

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### Shakespeare Matters

Published quarterly by the  
The Shakespeare Fellowship  
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Baltimore, MD 21209

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The Shakespeare Fellowship

Subscriptions to *Shakespeare Matters* are \$40 per year (\$20 for online issues only). Family or institution subscriptions are \$45 per year. Patrons of the Fellowship are \$75 and up. Please send subscription requests to:

**The Shakespeare Fellowship**  
**PO Box 421**  
**Hudson, MA 01749**

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 501(c)(3) nonprofit (Fed ID 04-3578550).

Dues, grants and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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

*From the Editors*

## In Praise of Amateurism:

**Reviewing *Kenneth Burke on Shakespeare*  
 Edited by Scott L. Newstok  
 West Lafayette, Ind: Parlor Press, 2007**

Oxfordians may not be surprised to learn that, ironically, the most influential American literary critic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – a man whose star is still on the ascent in academic circles in the second decade after his decease– was an itinerant scholar who never earned a BA, let alone a PhD. He never held a tenured position, let alone an endowed chair, at a University. He even had the audacity as an undergraduate to drop out of Columbia University, having previously dropped out of Ohio State. “It is now time,” he announced to a friend, “for me to drop out of college.... and start studying.” And start studying he did, within six years publishing the first, and still in many respects definitive, English translation of Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*.

Bureaucracies do not easily assimilate men or women of genius, but if fate is kind to them their work can retrospectively

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achieve a significant measure of influence among those who do labor in the vineyards of academia. When Scott L. Newstok, the editor of this fabulous little volume, contacted me some months ago about reviewing *Kenneth Burke on Shakespeare*, I already had a review copy. For over a decade, I’ve followed the academic



**The late Kenneth Burke, uneducated literary critic par excellence, reflects on art, the critic, and biography.**

renewal in Burke studies from a comfortable distance, and having read some of what Burke has to say about Shakespeare in such books as *Attitudes Towards History* (1937, 1959), I was excited to see that someone had done the difficult labor of gathering into a single, carefully edited volume all of Burke’s writing, spread over many decades and appearing in many diverse and sometimes obscure sources, on Shakespeare.

Kenneth Duva Burke (1897-1993) is hard to pigeonhole, and that may be one reason why “Burkology,” as he named the field himself (not without his tongue firmly planted in cheek), has become a growth discipline in academia. Like so many prophets, Burke remained largely unsung in his own land until after he died, and it is only over the past twenty or so years that a veritable renaissance in Burke studies started to spread his influence in academia. Young academicians like me, without the luck to have known the man, have belatedly come to know him in his work. By now it is obvious that Burke was, hands down, the most interest-

*(Continued on page 9)*

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

## Mark Anderson Reports from Sin City

A hotel-casino on the strip in Sin City is the natural market for a debate on the Shakespeare authorship question, right? On Friday, July 11, Profs. Alan Nelson, William Rubinstein and I sat down for a one-on-one-on-one debate at Bally's Casino, part of the larger FreedomFest '08 conference, a primarily libertarian-oriented gathering. Not surprising, I suppose, that our 100-minute confab was programmed during the same time slot as debates on "Islam: radical or peaceful?" and "Should we regulate Wall Street more or less?" as well as talks about "rare coins and collectibles" and "the hottest commodity for 2009: copper!" A live teleconference with former Republican presidential contender Rep. Ron Paul of Texas also competed for attention.

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**Nelson, on the other hand, centered his pro-Shakspeare argument around the claim that during the author's lifetime, everyone who referred to him referred to him as "Master" or "Mister" -- meaning he was of lower class, not aristocratic or courtly class. I didn't dispute his claim. For instance, I said, John Davies refers to "Mr. Will: Shake-speare" [sic] as "our English Terence," adding that many people at the time believed that Terence was a Roman actor who stood as a front man for one or more Roman aristocratic authors...**



Shakespeare, it seems, was not on the high priority list of most 'fest attendees. But despite relatively low draw (attendance fluctuated between about 15 and 40 persons), the debate itself was actually quite good. Prof. Nelson, long known to Oxfordians for his often strident stance about both heretics and Edward de Vere himself, presented the case for Will Shakspeare of Stratford. Bill Rubinstein, co-author of the recent book *The Truth Will Out* presented the arguments for the arriviste Bard contender Henry Neville. And yours truly made his case for an Elizabethan literary earl who, they both claimed, died too soon to have been Shakespeare.

This was the point I decided to go on the attack about, rather than taking a defensive posture. In my allotted eight minutes for presenting the pro-de Vere case (the first half provided another 11 minutes to make the case against the Stratfordian theory), I argued three points: That Shake-speare chose settings from de Vere's life, the author characterized people from de Vere's life and the Bard stopped creating new works in 1604, the year de Vere died.

The first two points are, in no small part, the story of "Shake-

(continued on p. 14)

(*Seventeen Fat Oxen, cont. from p. 1*)

...so as Dorus was fayne alone to take the Ringe. Wherein truly at lest my womanish eyes could not discern, but that *taking his staffe from his thigh, the descending it a little downe, the getting it vp into the rest, the letting of the point fall*, and taking the ring was but all one motion at lest (if they were diuers motions) they did so stealingly slippe one into another, as the latter part was euer in hande, before the eye could discern the former was ended. Indeed Dametas found fault that he shewed no more strength in *shaking of his staffe*: but to my conceite the fine cleernes of bearing it was exceeding delightful.

(2:5, emphasis added)<sup>1</sup>

Metaphorically, we might say that Musidorus has done the deed with Pamela, and Dametas is a wanker. However, Dametas “shaking of his staffe” is the closest alliterative synonym (bawdy and tilting) to the pseudonym Shake-speare that I have seen. When Fulke Greville supervised the first edition of the *Arcadia* (1590), it was dedicated to and appeared under the patronage of Mary Pembroke, who in 1593 produced an enlarged and definitive edition. Dametas’ reference to “shaking of his staffe” is therefore contemporary with the introduction of the Shakespeare literary name in April, 1593. So, who was Dametas?

The opening sentence of the preceding chapter begins: “But Dorus was about to tell further, Dametas (who came whistling, & counting vpon his fingers how many loades of hay his seuenteen fat oxen eat vp in a year) desired Zelmane from the king that she would come into the lodge” (2:4). Dametas with his oxen is an oddity in the pastoral *Arcadia* (more herdsman than shepherd), but his having precisely *seventeen* Oxen seems a deliberate provocation to interpret, and invites an easy identification (just as “but that Rich she is” in Sidney’s sonnets unambiguously identifies Penelope Rich as Stella). “Seuenteen oxen” suggests the 17th Earl of Oxford, who by 1590 had held the title for 28 years.

The introduction of the literary name “Shakespeare” in 1593, then, specifically refers to the cult which had grown up around Oxford, as reflected in his portrayal as Dametas: the “seuenteen oxen+ shaking of his staffe” is Oxford’s authorship safely encapsulated in the *Arcadia* for all time. By choosing “Shakespeare” as a sobriquet he has left his authorship to hatch, cuckoo-like, in the enemy’s nest.

The *Arcadia* identifies Dametas as a poet, but also mocks him as an incompetent one: “that clowne Dametas will stumble sometimes vpon some songs that might become a better brayne.” He is also, much to the dismay of his fellow Arcadians, the closest counselor to his monarch (Basilius) during a religious crisis, the oracle of Apollo.

When Dametas goes to the wars, he expects that “many inkhornes and books” should be employed in recounting his exploits:

Then gaue he order to a painter for his deuice, which was,

a plowe with the oxen lewsed from it, a sword with a great many armes and legges cut off, and lastly a great armie of pen and inke-hornes, and bookes. Nether did he sticke to tell the secrete of his intent, which was, that he had lefte the plowe, to doo such bloody deedes with his swoorde, as many inkhornes and books should be employed about the historifying of them...(3.13)

“Employed” is ambiguous enough to identify Dametas as both patron and author. The Gad’s Hill episode would be one of Oxford’s historified exploits. For some details, see Robert Detobel’s *Shakespeare Matters* article, “Falstaff in the Low Countries.”<sup>2</sup> But despite his boasting, Dametas’ war record, like Oxford’s own, is less than heroic. He partakes in the comic

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cowards duel with Clinias, an episode sometimes identified as a source of that between Viola/Cesario and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, but beyond that is no warrior. In fact, Dametas is the consistent butt of some of *Arcadia*’s most trenchant insults, even being described as “the most arrant doltish clowne, that I thinke euer was without the priuiledge of a bable” (3.6) and put down as one whose “basenesse of minde is such, that it sinckes a thousand degrees lower, then the basest bodie could carrie the most base fortune” (4.5). But despite these obvious character flaws, Dametas is one who acquires the indulgence of the prince, who discovers

(Continued on p. 6)



(Seventeen Fat Oxen, cont. from p. 5)



A *Countercuffe Given to Martin Iunior*:  
The first of three 1589-90 pamphlets by  
“Pasquill Cavaliero of England.”

“shadowes” of Dametas’ vertues mistaking his “silence” for wit,” his “bluntnesse” for “integritie,” his “bestly ignorance” for “vertuous simplicitie,” fancying that “his weaknesse with his presence would much be mended,”

And so like a creature of his owne making, he liked him more and more, and thus hauing first giuen him the office of principall heardman, lastly, since he tooke this strange determination, he hath in a manner put the life of himselfe and his children into his hands. Which authoritie (like too great a sayle for so small a boate) doth so ouer-sway poore Dametas, that if before he were a good foole in a chamber, he might be allowed it now in a comedie....

(3.6)

Like Oxford, Dametas is unhappily married, at least according to the testimony of his wife, Miso, who blames her father

for playing the “hasty fool” by marrying her to the irresponsible spendthrift, Dametas, instead of another, more provident husband:

Miso (sitting on the ground with her knees vp, & her hands vpon her knees) tuning her voice with many a quauering cough, thus discoursed vnto them. I tel you true (said she) whatsoeuer you thinke of me, you will one day be as I am; & I, simple though I sit here, thought once my pennie as good siluer, as some of you do: and if my father had not plaid the hasty foole (it is no lie I tell you) I might haue had an other-gaines husband, then Dametas. But let that passe, God amend him: and yet I speake it not without good cause.

(14.1)

The passage recalls the fact that Anne Cecil, before being married to Oxford, had been engaged to Sir Phillip Sidney — who, along with his sister Mary, had written the *Arcadia*.

So what was the cause of this relentless parody against Oxford, and why did Mary Pembroke protect it with her name? Harvey in *Pierce’s Supererogation* (1593), when he alludes to Dametas, adds the necessary context: “and euer when you think upon Dametas, remember the Confuting Champion more surquidrous than Araxius, and more absurd then Dametas, and if I should always hereafter call him Dametas, I should fitt him with a name, as naturally proper to him as his owne” (II: 100).<sup>3</sup> Commentators generally agree that Nashe is Harvey’s “Confuting Champion,” and if Harvey is thinking of *Strange News* (1592), and if we forget the seventeen oxen, then the interpretation seems valid up to a point. But if Harvey is thinking back three years to 1590 and the *Arcadia*’s original publication, then Nashe in the anti-Martinist hierarchy was Cuthbert Curry Knave, and the Monarch’s champion during the Marprelate crisis was Cavaliero Pasquill, identified by Elizabeth Appleton, among others,<sup>4</sup> as Oxford: “Pasquill has taken up your glove,” declared the masked knight to Martin, “and desires you to charge your weapon at him like a man....I must have three courses of the lance with Th. Cartwright.”

wright” (CC 60).<sup>5</sup> If shaking of his staffe is bawdy, then does Pasquill’s description of himself as on “but lately dubbed...for the clean breaking of his staff upon Martin’s face,” suggest a certain familiarity between Pasquill and Marprelate? To pursue this line of inquiry will lead us directly into consideration of Mary Sidney’s suppressed role in the Marprelate controversy. In the *Arcadia* at the end of “the painted muster of an eleuen conquered beauties,” the commentary abruptly changes mood:

**The Monarch’s champion  
during the Marprelate crisis  
was Cavaliero Pasquill, identified by Elizabeth Appleton,  
among others, as Oxford:  
“Pasquill has taken up your  
glove,” declared the masked  
knight to Martin, “and desires  
you to charge your weapon at  
him like a man....I must have  
three courses of the lance  
with Th. Cartwright.”**

It was a young mayd, which sate pulling out a thorne out of a lambs foote, with her looke so attentiu vpon it, as if that little foote coulde haue bene the circle of her thoughts, her apparell so poore, as it had nothing but the inside to adorne it, a shephooke lying by her side with a bottle vpon it. But with al that pouertie, beauty plaid the prince, and commanded as many harts as the greatest Queene there did. Her beautie and her estate made her quicklie to be knowne to be the faire shepheardesse Vrania.

(1.16)

Urania is Mary Pembroke, who since Sidney’s death had become a literary leader, and since Leicester’s death had become the patroness of Pembrokiana, of the

Dudley-Sidney-Herbert radical Protestant alliance. In the context of the religious controversies of the late Elizabethan reign, the thorn that Genevan Mary is removing from the lamb's foot (the Lamb of God or Church of England) in 1590 would be the Anglican Bishops, the same enemies with which Martin jostled.

In *Pasquill's Return* (Oct. 1589) under the subsection "The May-game of Martinism" we learn that the Queen's Men parodied Martin as "Maid Marion, trimly dressed up in a cast gown and a kercher of Dame Lawson's..." (83). Not only do we have Marion and Margaret (Dame Lawson's first name), but May itself is a diminutive of both Mary and Margaret. Traditionally a male played the part of Maid Marion (disguised with a female name and costume), but we know that the pseudonym Martin is a disguise, a male disguise, and therefore by reversal is played by a woman, by Maid Marion. Interestingly, in *Twelfth Night*, when Cesario (male disguise) reveals himself to be Viola (the maid), it is in the language of Marprelate justifying his use of humour in religious controversy.

In *Countercluff* (Aug 1598) Pasquill identifies his place of writing as "my castle and colours at London Stone" — otherwise known as London's Vere House. It is striking to note that this was a direct reply to the geographical statement that Marprelate's *Epistle* (Nov 1588) is "Given at my Castle between two Wales." This location has nothing to do with the locale that would have been relevant to the two usual suspects for Martin's identity — Job Throkmorton's North Warwickshire estate or John Penry's farm cottage at Cefu Brith in Brecknockshire. On the contrary, Martin situates himself in the Marches of Wales, whose President had his main residence at Ludlow Castle. From 1559 first Mary's father, and then from 1586 until 1601 her husband, were president of Wales and proprietors of Ludlow.

How did Oxford and his anti-Martinists retaliate to the Dametas attack? Nashe has been given some credit for the illicit publication of *Astrophil and Stella* in 1591. As the identifying Sonnet 37 was not published until 1598, readers had seven years to speculate on who Stella was, but because Urania, the muse of astronomy, was as starry as Stella, Mary must have been

the prime suspect. In fact rumour of incest between Mary and Philip trickled down to the royalist John Aubrey: "and there was so great love between him and his faire sister that I have heard old Gentlemen say that they lay together and it was thought the first Philip Earle of Pembroke was begot by him..."<sup>6</sup> A literal reading, in part, of Sidney's *Arcadia* dedication to Mary does not dispel this idea. And it is worth noting that Shakespeare mimics Sidney in his own

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**If the rustic clown Dametas with the shaking of his staffe inspired Oxford to the Shakespeare name, then Mary Herbert saddled him with a Shakespeare who was a rustic clown.**

**Jonson's Sogliardo echoes this development. In the same play it is the Oxford character, Puntarvolo, who "will taint a staff well at Tilt." Come the Herbert folio, Jonson will write "he seems to shake a lance..." at ignorance. He could not write "he seems to *shake a staff* at ignorance," because Dametas would then come "whistling, & counting vpon his fingers how many loades of hay his seuteen fat oxen eat up in a year."**

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*Venus and Adonis* dedication.

If Oxford created and launched the Shakespeare pseudonym as a response to Dametas with his seuteen oxen and the shaking of his staffe, then he has in a sense, broken cover and come out into the open, and it is the Shakespeare name that allows Mary to entrap him. One can either expose a concealed author, or conceal him and his intent permanently by substituting him with an apolitical frontman. It took five and a half years—from April 1593 (*Venus & Adonis*) to Sept. 1598 (Meres)—to separate Oxford completely from his works.

If the rustic clown Dametas with the

shaking of his staffe inspired Oxford to the Shakespeare name, then Mary Herbert saddled him with a Shakespeare who was a rustic clown. Jonson's Sogliardo echoes this development. In the same play it is the Oxford character, Puntarvolo, who "will taint a staff well at Tilt." Come the Herbert folio, Jonson will write "he seems to shake a lance" at ignorance. He could not write "he seems to shake *a staff*" at ignorance, because Dametas would then come "whistling, & counting vpon his fingers how many loades of hay his seuteen fat oxen eat vp in a year."

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Book and chapter numbers are all to *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia written by Philip Sidney*. Ponsonby 1590, from Albert Feuillerat, *The Complete Works of Sir Phillip Sidney*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Detobel, "Falstaff in the Low Countries." *Shakespeare Matters* 5:1 (Fall 2005), 1, 4, 7, 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> Harvey quotations are from Alexander B. Grosart, *The Works of Gabriel Harvey, D.C.L.* Printed for private circulation, 1884. New York: AMS Reprint, 1966. In Three volumes.

<sup>4</sup> Appleton, Elizabeth. *An Anatomy of the Marprelate Controversy 1588-1596 — Retracing Shakespeare's Identity and that of Martin Marprelate*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Quotations from Nashe and Pasquill are from Roland McKerrow, *The Works of Thomas Nashe. Edited from the Original Texts*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1910. CC= Countercluffe, R=Returne, A=Apologie.

<sup>6</sup> *Sidney: Critical History*, ed. Martin Garret. Routledge 1996.

<sup>7</sup> *Twelfth Night*: "Viola. If nothing lets to make vs happie both/ But this my masculine vsurp'd attyre:/ Do not embrace me till each circumstance,/ Of place,

(Continued on p. 28)

**Review of A.D. Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*.  
New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.  
xiv+428 pp. \$30.00**

**Reviewed by Richard M. Waugaman, MD**

What happens when an otherwise brilliant Stratfordian writes about the works of Edward de Vere? In the case of A.D. Nuttall, the result is a deeply thoughtful and original book, marred by his systematic blind spot about authorship. This combination of strengths and defects makes for fascinating and instructive reading. Nuttall's readings of each play never fail to stimulate new thoughts about them. He shows deep familiarity with previous criticism, while also showing the confidence to strike out on his own repeatedly. His book is an excellent case study of how far such a creative thinker can go while remaining willfully ignorant as to the author's identity. Orthodox Shakespeare scholarship is the history of shackled thought, of brainwashed intellect, of curtailed curiosity. It makes one long for the day, perhaps not far off, when the full intellectual potential of Shakespeare scholars will be unleashed, liberated from conscious and unconscious constraints imposed by the authorship orthodoxy. Shakespeare studies will then truly move from the Dark Ages to a literary Renaissance of unparalleled scope.

Ponder, for example, the way Nuttall found it necessary to begin and end his book with statements of faith, with the orthodox *Credo in unum deum*, William Shakespeare. On page one, Nuttall writes of taking a break from a Shakespeare conference in Stratford: Shakespeare "must often have walked in the street in which I was standing" (1). Then, the final words on the final page of the book are "the boy from Stratford" (383). But between these bookends of orthodox

presumption lie fascinating insights into the mind of the author, as Nuttall stretches the bungee cord of his imagination, only to be jerked back to conventional belief in an author who manifested only native genius, unspoiled by education or reading. Nuttall speaks of the "habit of concealment in Shakespeare" (191), a habit that

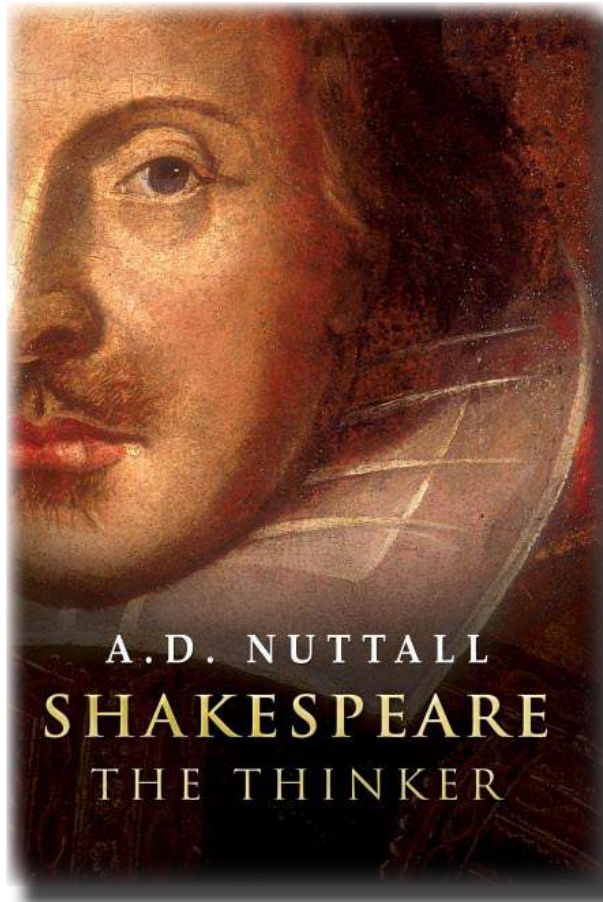
is not surprising, given the fact that de Vere concealed his identity as the author. But Nuttall's bungee cord then forces him to label this pattern of concealment "almost pathological," since he cannot account for what motivated it.

You think I exaggerate? Consider, for example, Nuttall's brilliant exposition of the effect of Ophite Gnostic heresies on Shakespeare. Nuttall gives a richly constructed interpretation of *Measure for Measure*, arguing persuasively that the Christ figure in this play is none other than Angelo:

"Yes Angelo, we all know, is diabolically wicked. I said earlier that it is hard to think of anything Shakespeare has not thought of first. It is so here. We have reached a point where we are suddenly halted, mentally paralysed by a figure simultaneously redemptive and Satanic" (269).

Nuttall then links Angelo with 16th century Protestant theological debates on whether Christ was or was not sinless. He argues that Marlowe's portrayal of Doctor Faustus was influenced by the Ophite Gnostic figure of Simon Magus. So far, so good (in fact, not just good, but superb). Now, watch closely – how did our man Shakespeare learn about this?

"Marlowe... could easily have rambled on about this in some pub" (274). I wish I could say I just made that up. But I didn't. I am deeply embarrassed on Nuttall's behalf to report he actually wrote that. "In some pub" – that's how he thinks Shakespeare learned



*(Continued on p. 10)*



*(Burke, cont. from p. 3)*

ing, and belatedly the most influential American literary critic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not to mention the only one whose influence is remembered in a triennial conference that regularly draws several hundred participants, as well as a society dedicated to the study and promulgation of his work.

Burke's work creatively fuses rhetorical studies (anticipating, in critical regards, the current academic emphasis on "cultural studies" which downplays aesthetics in favor of study and analysis of any cultural product, from a Shakespeare sonnet to a cereal box), and modern structural linguistics, spiced with psychoanalysis and Marxist theory (in both cases, of a non-dogmatic, provisional kind). Perhaps Burke's core idea, however – one shared by Ernst Cassirer and Suzanne Langer, among others – is that language is a "symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."

Above all, Burke was an enemy of dogma in any form, dressed in any academic discipline or trend. Although attracted to Marxist thought during the 1920s, he later broke openly with the Communist Party. He was in the habit of corresponding, on the other hand, with leading creative intellectuals in diverse fields, among them William Carlos Williams, Malcolm Cowley, Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, Ralph Ellison, Katherine Anne Porter, Jean Toomer, Hart Crane, and Marianne Moore. His later influences included Harold Bloom, Stanley Cavell, Susan Sontag (his student at the University of Chicago), Geoffrey Hartman, Edward Said, Rene Girard, Frederic Jameson, and Clifford Geertz. Answers.com summarizes his thought as "an unusual combination of powerful and original theory marked throughout by paradox, erudition, and a comic spirit."

For all these reasons, Scott Newstok's fastidiously edited collection of Burke's writings on Shakespeare is a volume that deserves to be read and celebrated. But, more than that, the volume has the potential to play a significant role in the authorship controversy – assuming, that is, that readers of Burke's Shakespearean oeuvre can read "between the lines," to appreciate implications that may not be overtly stated, and to avoid the unnecessary assumption that just because Burke does not announce an overt "anti-Stratfordian" agenda, his work is therefore "orthodox" in nature. Since his death Burke has belatedly earned a reputation as one of those giant intellects whose mind is able to anticipate concepts that are left for future generations to unfold. In no case is this more obvious than his writings on Shakespeare. And yet, one proceeds to review the relevant evidence with some trepidation. The current state of Burke studies might be compared to that of Freudian psychoanalysis in the 1930s, when Freud had his first encounter with the idea of Oxford's authorship. As we know, Freud's conviction, which was based on real research and original thinking, was greeted with stunned dismay by such chief disciples as Ernest Jones, who knew only enough to get a whiff of danger. It's difficult to build a movement for intellectual change when you are going to be subjected, through the theory of guilt by association, to the "bizarre mutant racism" – to use the depressingly astute phrase of former Folger Education's Director Richmond Crinkley – of orthodox bardology. Unlike Freud, Burke was not an

out-and-out Shakespeare heretic, so why taint his memory now with the sordid insinuation that he saw beyond the walnut shell of orthodox academic criticism, far enough to know that something was rotten in the state of Shakespearean studies?

To these doubts must be added the fact that, at first glance, the prospects of enlisting Burke as a fellow traveler of the anti-Stratfordians don't seem very auspicious. The initial essay in this volume, Burke's 1964 lecture, "Shakespeare Was What?" begins by firmly disavowing the possibility of a biographical reading of the Sonnets because, as even happens in a Roman á clef, "the figures are in various ways 'idealized' for the purposes of fiction"

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(3). That is Burke's announced rationale for the disclaimer that inaugurates the lecture: "Let's begin by saying what this talk is not going to do. It is not going to attempt reading Shakespeare's works as the story of his private life" (3).

On the other hand one may be forgiven, I hope, for speculating that this purely theoretical concern about the relationship between individual psychology and literary convention is not the sum and substance of Burke's reticence to venture into Shakespearean biography. Burke is no blinkered formalist, hiding behind literary clichés, but a first rate intellect who wants to preclude naïve misunderstanding before moving on to make his primary points. If we read carefully, I believe the entire trend of Burke's thinking is to undermine the orthodox effort to reduce Shakespeare to a name on a title page or between quotation marks in an academic study.

*(Continued on p. 12)*

(Nuttall, cont. from p. 8)

about the Ophite Gnostics.

Do you see my point? Nuttall goes from the sublime to the ridiculous, as his mental bungee cord jerks him back from brilliant interpretations to a *reductio ad absurdum*. And the orthodox call us foolish! A book should be written on Shakespeare's Pub. Someone has claimed that the Stratford grammar school offered the equivalent of a graduate level education. That's absurd. It was the pub. What an amazing pub! Pubs today are different. But back then, many pubs were more or less like Ivy League colleges. And Shakespeare's pub was like Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study. Shakespeare would walk in, sit down, and tell the proprietor, "I'll have a pint. So, what's new on Ophite Gnosticism? And, by the way, can you go by boat from Verona to Milan?"

It would be funny if it weren't so sad. Tragically, Nuttall died just before his book was published. Imagine how much more he could have contributed to Shakespeare studies if some day he had dared to cut himself loose from his bungee cord. His orthodox colleagues would have been upset. But also secretly envious of his intellectual courage. The smart ones are surely too smart to believe their own claptrap that there is "no doubt whatsoever — Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare." I will admit, though, that they have a point about us Oxfordians being believers in conspiracy theories. I didn't think I was before reading Nuttall. But now I'm convinced there is indeed a conspiracy — an orthodox Shakespearean pub theory conspiracy.

Nuttall can be reassuringly unsparing in his critiques of fellow Shakespeare scholars. Discussing *Hamlet*, he notes that "It is a curious experience to turn from twentieth-century critics as they laboriously excogitate, one at a time, such notions as 'self-reference' and 'self-fashioning' to Shakespeare himself. For Shakespeare these notions are merely preliminary approximations, the springboard for a far more complex and acute interrogation of the subject" (196). Nuttall might be ambivalent to realize just how much several parts of his book have unwittingly advanced the cause of de Vere. For example, he calls the close connections between Lyly's *Euphues* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* "beyond the capacities of most modern readers [to grasp]... Shakespeare has read Lyly better than most university-educated moderns read him" (85). He fails to mention that Lyly was working as de Vere's secretary.

Let's go back to Nuttall's first page. Keep in mind both his unusual perceptiveness and also his authorship blind spot as you read these words:

The man is elusive— one might almost say, systematically elusive. There is something eerie about a figure that can write so much and give so little away... The author of the best plays ever written must often have walked in the street in which I was standing. The recurrent 'must have' employed by biographers is rightly regarded with suspicion by all reasonable persons. But this was as safe a 'must have' as one could hope to find.

(1)

Do you sense an Oxfordian longing to burst free? I do. Nuttall comes so tantalizingly close to recognizing the truth about Shakespeare's identity, then he shirks back, clinging to "safe" assumptions, as though terrified as he nears the vertiginous cliffs at the edge of the known world of orthodoxy. But he knows something is wrong with orthodox biographies. He knows that "Shakespeare's work is a huge vanishing act" (18). He knows the implicitly composite figure of the man from Stratford and the actual author is elusive — because such an amalgam is a figment

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of our imagination, the misshapen result of a square peg of false assumptions being hammered frantically against the round hole of truth.

Nuttall admits that Shakespeare "still challenges our deepest assumptions" (275). He adds that, "Today we have come to use 'heresy' and 'subversive' as terms of praise and welcome" (275). Heresy comes, in fact, from a Greek word that means "to choose." If only Nuttall would have taken more seriously his own penetrating observations about Shakespeare, and then chosen to take that final step of challenging orthodox authorship assumptions. Was Nuttall tortured by the nagging suspicion that trusted authorities had led him astray here? Could we even conjecture that he was crossing his fingers behind his back as he mouthed the empty words of his authorship Credo? Did he expect his most

discerning readers to see the subversive, ironic meaning of his ostensibly orthodox pub theory? We can only hope.

Certain cultural experiences make such a deep impression that they get passed on orally, from one generation to the next, for centuries. All the residents of one remote, illiterate Indonesian village survived the December 26, 2004, tsunami because they obeyed the injunction that had been passed down since the last tsunami to affect their village, more than a century earlier: "If the ground shakes, run to the mountains." The distinctive culture of childhood has passed on the massive trauma of the plague of 1349 in every line of "Ring around the rosy." The culture of the theater world still obeys a taboo against speaking aloud a certain name that is closely related to Shakespeare. The name, of course, is "Macbeth." But I would speculate that this name taboo is displaced from an earlier taboo against speaking aloud Shakespeare's real name, Edward de Vere. Thus hunch occurred to me as I read Nuttall's observation that the Duke is never addressed by name in *Measure for Measure*. I am grateful to Nuttall for stimulating my surmise, which of course lies outside the range of his bungee cord.

Nuttall is indebted to the traditional authorship theory for leaving him important original discoveries to make. He announces portentously, "It will be the argument of this book that Shakespeare... was... very intelligent" (17). Who would have guessed? All right, in fairness, Nuttall is going against centuries of belief in Shakespeare as Nature's Genius. It is only slowly and grudgingly that orthodox Shakespeare scholars have admitted he may have done a little reading here and there, in English, French, Latin, okay a little Greek, and well maybe some Italian too. Nuttall, on the other hand, notes that, "Shakespeare's sensitivity to Greek literary structures is astonishing" (208). And, in contrast with Ben Jonson, Shakespeare felt no need to draw attention to his erudition.

I recently read the theory that Shakespeare spent lots of times browsing in bookstores — that's why he didn't need to own any books! The intellect of scholars who concoct such fairy tales has been arrested in ways Shakespeare's intellect never was, as they cling to the quasi-religious belief that the divine Shakespeare was so inspired that Nature, not Nurture or Art, was the sole wellspring of his creative genius. Such *a priori* assumptions have in fact blinded bright scholars to many dimensions of Shakespeare, including his intelligence. They've been paying too little attention to his works, and too much attention to the engraving of the "bland head" (Nuttall 1) in the First Folio.

The farther Nuttall strays from Stratford, the more brightly his brilliance shines. I am convinced there's much more to the story of Marlowe's literary and erotic rivalry with de Vere than has yet been told. And Nuttall encourages me in this belief by his noting that "As long as Marlowe lived, and for some time after, Shakespeare's writing is marked by special energy, an almost desperate assertion of brilliance" (25). Nuttall tries to connect *The Tempest* with Marlowe, by citing the kinship between Prospero and Doctor Faustus, who both wield control over the spirit world. I suspect there is a much more profound connection with Marlowe: "Prospero is in the grip of some moral distress that is

never explained to the audience" (367); "The strangest thing of all... is the intrusion into Prospero's Epilogue of a plea that the audience should pray for him" (371); "Prospero's fear is of something that lies deeper than his own murder" (375). I would suggest that one solution to the enigmas Nuttall so perceptively emphasizes would be to add the words "of Marlowe" to that last

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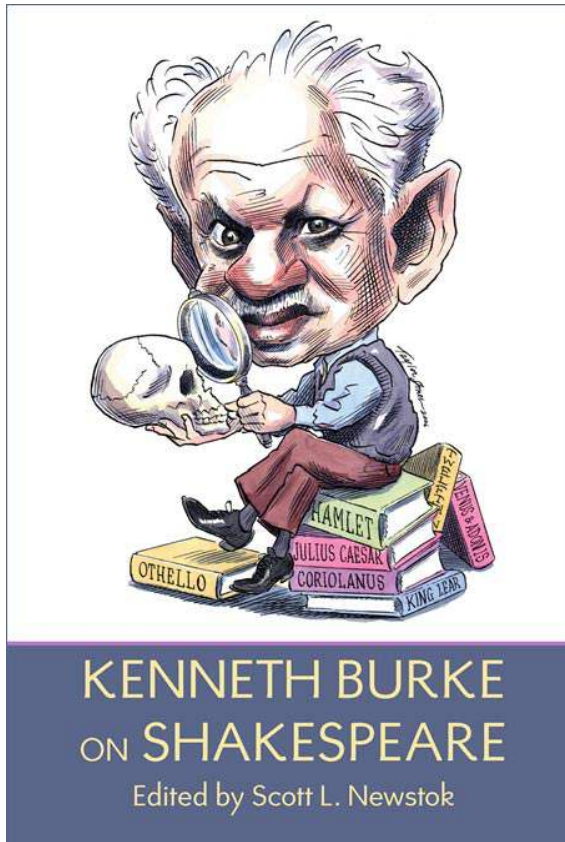
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sentence. Nuttall calls Marlowe "the now dead rival poet" (238) as he demonstrates how much he "haunts" *As You Like It*.

Pondering Nuttall's observations on *The Tempest* leads me to wonder if Antonio was not just Robert Cecil, say, to Prospero's de Vere-- what if Antonio is also de Vere to Prospero's Marlowe? Antonio's lack of contrition and the emptiness with which Prospero forgives him might be consistent with this speculation. Marlowe as the magician who controls the spirit world matches the content of Shakespeare's rival poet sonnets. And de Vere's culpability for Marlowe's death is consistent with some of the subsequent sonnets, such as 111 and 86 ("Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write/ Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?"). If de Vere

*(Continued on page 21)*

(Burke, cont. from p. 10)



He was far too shrewd a psychological and sociological thinker to fall for the evasive pabulum that so often passes for authentic intellectual engagement in the hallowed halls from which he departed, to preserve his intellectual freedom, in 1918.

In a typically Burkean turn, not a page later, for example, he acknowledges that “Shakespeare’s plays do reveal a kind of imagination ultimately impinging upon modes of self involvement that, as you prefer, could be called either suicidal or narcissistic... I mean: when Timon rails against Apemantus, he is but railing against an embarrassing copy of himself” (4). And, in an excerpt marked for deletion from Burke’s manuscript, but preserved by Professor Newstok, we read the following admission: “Though I have been in [the literary] business for forty years, when I was asked to give a talk on Shakespeare in general, I discovered that I was, in my very essence, terrified. I didn’t realize it until I got down to work. And of a sudden I thought, ‘look Burke, maybe the best thing for you to do is to get sick at the last moment, and send a telegram stating heart-felt regrets, etc.’” (7, fn. iv).

These don’t sound like the confessions of a man who is *merely* caught up in the conventional difficulties of literary biography, *merely* wrestling with the relationship between the formal and the psychological as a theoretical problem, manifested in the study of just any artist. While Burke had no difficulty over his career writing, in numerous short pieces and asides, about *particular* aspects of Shakespearean literary criticism (those that form the substance of Newstok’s book), when it came to the subject of “Shakespeare in general” he had the intelligent good sense to experience the

terror that comes when one has been asked to do something that is, in its very essence, impossible – at least within the confines of the orthodox paradigm of authorship. The truth is that for decades Burke had been writing, mostly in brief glances or asides within the context of larger theoretical works, about a Shakespeare who simply would not fit the Stratfordian biographical mold, at least not without a lot of plastic surgery and prosthesis. And, in my heart of hearts, I prefer to imagine that Burke understand the problem, even if he never overtly announced it

It is important to underscore, on the other hand, that Burke’s perspective was never primarily that of individual psychology or literary biography; he was an aesthetic and social historian, well aware that individual artists work within rhetorical traditions and as well as reflecting the social and historical circumstances of their own embodiment as individuals. Long before “new historicism,” throughout the years when “new criticism” recoiled in terror from the notion that anything “outside” the text could be relevant to its comprehension, the Marxian Burke wanted to situate and analyze literature (and more generally human symbolic action), both

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I believe the entire trend of Burke’s thinking is to undermine the orthodox effort to reduce Shakespeare to a name on a title page or between quotation marks in an academic study. Ironically, he was far too shrewd a psychological and sociological thinker to fall for the evasive pabulum that so often passes for authentic intellectual engagement in the hallowed halls from which he departed, to preserve his intellectual freedom, in 1918.

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historically and rhetorically. And from this perspective, Burke’s view of Shakespeare could not have been more unorthodox or anathematic to the dominant trends of Shakespearean studies, at least throughout the first seven decades of the twentieth century. Whether Burke ever knew Whitman’s prophetic statement that “only one of the Wolfish Earls, or some born knower and descendent, would seem to be the true author of these amazing works” we will probably never know. Nor are we likely to will know how familiar Burke may have been with Sir George Greenwood, John Thomas Looney, or Canon Gerald Rendall, to mention only some of the most obvious suspects from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. What is clear is that the terminology Burke developed in his analysis of Shakespeare *as a phenomenon* is, ultimately, impossible to reconcile with the orthodox view of authorship.

The contradiction is perhaps most obvious in Burke’s brief

asides about Shakespeare from *Attitudes About History*.

Like Whitman, Burke focuses on Shakespeare's paradoxical relationship to the feudal mode of production – the dominance of the agricultural “manor” economy – that during the 16<sup>th</sup> century is giving way before developing city economies and emerging mercantile capitalism, precipitating what Lawrence Stone would term the “crisis of the aristocracy.” Burke identifies the key term of this new economy as “ambition”; In Shakespeare's England, Burke shows, the word was in transition, from the feudal notion in which ambition was “punishable pride,” to “the commercial attitude” which transformed it into “the essence of vocation” (221). From this perspective, it is obvious to Burke that Shakespeare's attitude toward “ambition” – the value that created the class of upwardly mobile “new men” such as William Cecil – is distinctly feudal. Like his medieval ancestors, Shakespeare still regards ambition as a “very bad word” (254). *Macbeth* is a case in point: the play “represents the new bourgeois concepts of ambition in grotesque guise,” revealing a character in sharp contrast with a creator who retained “conservative, feudal norms of value” (221).

Is this the world view of a man who was to become an icon of the rising middle classes of Elizabethan England? The man who not only conveniently declined to pay his taxes, but regularly prosecuted his fellow citizens for petty debt, and by the time he died had amassed the largest real estate holdings in Stratford-upon-Avon? What writer so profoundly distrusts the psychological foundation of his own life experience? If not impossible, such circumstances should at least raise a scruple of doubt in the orthodox reader's mind.

Burke never directly addresses the contradiction. But if we follow his thought further, further clues reveal themselves. Far from being a grain-hoarding denizen of Stratford, Burke's Shakespeare is a writer whose “investment in courtly diction was considerable” (emphasis added) and for whom “the new modes of production and ownership (matched by new manners and style)” constituted an “endangering” of his “stylistic property,” resulting in a “threatened alienation which he countered by shifting his holdings....” (246). If Burke

were alive, one might wish to ask him exactly what he meant by the phrase “shifting his holdings.” But even without a clarification, it is evident that Burke's analysis, although his point of departure is social history and linguistics, rather than indi-

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vidual psychology and literary biography, is at the very least consistent with the ideas of J. Thomas Looney, who also describes Shakespeare as a writer poorly adapted to the emerging Elizabethan norms: “almost every reference to money and purses [in

Shakespeare] is of the loosest description and, by implication, teach[es] an improvidence that would soon involve any man's financial affairs in complete chaos” (98). One need hardly look further than Iago, Shakespeare's incarnation of evil, for an apt illustration of Looney's point: it is Iago who instructs his gullible mark, Roderigo, in the new mercantile morality of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: “Put money in thy purse...put money in thy purse... If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst” (3.1.332-35).

Burke confirms that the impression one might derive from *Othello* can and should be generalized to “Shakespeare” in general. Rather than endorse the “brave new world” of the new economy, the bard “represents the new bourgeois concepts of ambition in grotesque guise....confronting the emergent capitalist standards” while “retaining many conservative, feudal norms of value” (221).

Burke identifies two literary strategies by which Shakespeare coped with the “alienating” circumstances of his own social milieu. By means of “tragic ambiguity” he “gave expression to the rising trends, but gave them forbidding notions of criminality” (221). These are strong words, but they illustrate the extent of Shakespeare's alienation from the social and epistemic trends that characterized the emergence of the social class of which he was, if we are to follow the orthodox view, an outstanding exemplar. The second accommodation, according to Burke, was Shakespeare's deployment of the formula “sweet are the uses of adversity”:

We might analyze Shakespeare as a writer who, in his stylistic inheritance from feudalism, had invested thoroughly in the homeopathic remedy, inducing him to evolve a set of solaces that ‘made the best of things’ (as in his ‘Sweet are the uses of adversity’ [*As You Like It* 2.1.12] formula, the formula that we consider as the ‘essence’ of the feudal Shakespeare). But the incoming ‘economy of plenty,’ with its shift to the cult of acquisitions, and a corresponding shift from ‘wisdom’ to ‘power-knowledge’ threatened to

(Continued on p. 14)



(Burke, cont. from p. 13)

destroy his homeopathic coordinates (whereby one developed 'tolerance' to misfortune by 'stylistic dosage').

(222)

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I believe that Burke's comments on Shakespeare as a "homeopathic" physician of the soul, including his own, has further, profound implications. These, however, are the subject for another essay. To summarize, this work is highly recommended. Burke's thought is complex, and the book

is not an easy one. This review has concentrated on those aspects of Burke's thinking that are most relevant to concerns of readers of *Shakespeare Matters*. But there is much more to ponder and learn from in Newstok's volume: the book contains short, but theoretically dense essays (requiring and rewarding serious study), including Burke's penetrating commentaries on *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Othello*, *Timon*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Macbeth*.

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(News articles, cont. from p. 4)

*speare" By Another Name.* I discussed the parallels between de Vere's life and *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, and *Merry Wives of Windsor*. (Rubinstein, I noticed, places emphasis on *MWW* and how Henry Neville was fat and... er... therefore Falstaffian? The death of Falstaff in *Henry V*, he says, comes at the receipt of an ambassadorial post in Paris for Neville. Rubinstein's "Shakespeare" needed to kill off his most popular character so the author could go serve Her Majesty's pleasure across the English channel.)

Nelson, on the other hand, centered his pro-Shakespeare argument around the claim that during the author's lifetime, everyone who referred to him referred to him as "Master" or "Mister" -- meaning he was of lower class, not aristocratic or courtly class.

I didn't dispute his claim. For instance, I said, John Davies refers to "Mr. Will: Shake-speare" [sic] as "our English Terence," adding that many people at the time believed that Terence was a Roman actor who stood as a front-man for one or more Roman aristocratic authors.

Nelson also denigrated de Vere's skills as a poet, although admitted that de Vere was at least "in the same ballpark" with Shakespeare -- stating that no one recognized Henry Neville as a poet or playwright of any stature during his lifetime, and so the Nevillian case comes out of left field. He also quoted a lengthy diatribe by David Kathman (proprietor of the Stratfordian

Shakespeare Authorship website) against the Nevillians.

As a result, I didn't have to do much work against the Neville case.

The 1604 argument, however, is something I think Oxfordians need to claim as ours. The evidence is on our side, especially now that the new research on *The Tempest* is beginning to get published.

I'll blog about my 1604 argument another time. (Right now, hotel check-out time looms.)

In the end, those in the audience willing to venture a vote for one candidate over any other broke for Shakespeare vs. de Vere vs. Neville by 11 to 8 to 1. Oxfordians were in the minority, but only just.

The trick is to get a crowd next time.

— Contributed by Mark K. Anderson

### Mark Rylance Wins Tony

The June 15th Tony awards, the telecast of which this Shakespeare blogger confesses he's never actually watched before, brought news worth celebrating in Oxfordville. But word has it -- word that admittedly has taken unusually long to filter its way up the system here at *Shakespeare Matters* -- that not only did the superlative actor and noted Shakespeare heretic Mark Rylance win a Tony award for Best Performance by a leading actor in a Play (in the farce *Boeing-Boeing*), but he also gave an acceptance speech for the ages.

As comedy writer, sportscaster and blogger Ken Levine blogged on Friday, "Since it's a good bet only three of you at the most saw the Tonys last Sunday you probably missed this acceptance speech by Mark Rylance. It's one of the best ever. I will be voting for this guy for everything from now on."

— Contributed by Mark K. Anderson

### Who's the Crackpot?

Take it from your editor, it's tough being a University Professor these days. You wouldn't believe the stuff these un-

dergraduates come up with.

"The whole William Shakespeare thing is a sham."

So begins Mark Vierthaler's *Lawrence Journal World* article on the stupid things naive students write for their professors.

"Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford," continues Vierthaler, "was the real man behind the quill."

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**While it would certainly be a mistake not to concede that anti-Stratfordians have much to learn, one wonders why the supposedly objective Shapiro seems to devote so much time to detailing the alleged failures of one side in the authorship debate, but has nary a word to say, at least in his book's pre-publication commentary, about the many and glaring problems with the orthodox authorship account. This doesn't sound very "objective."**

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"Lump this in with Richard Hardin's group of theories, student papers or correspondence so far off the academic beaten path that they bear repeating. Sometimes called "crackpot files," they often leave professors chuckling — or scratching their heads.

"However, the theory that Shakespeare didn't write his works has garnered so much public attention that Hardin, a professor of English at Kansas University, is wondering whether maybe he isn't the one marching to the wrong drumbeat.

"That thing has come on so strong that I'm beginning to wonder if I'm the crackpot," he said. "Believing as I do that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare."

Right. Don't get too complacent with those "ironies."

### **Shapiro: Anti-Stratfordians Just "Don't Understand"**

Columbia Professor James Shapiro, who is bringing out an ostensibly nonpartisan history of the authorship question, believes that anti-Stratfordians need to go back to school: "there are many things the anti-Stratfordians don't understand. They don't understand how texts were transmitted, or the way in which author's lives are connected to texts. The simple answer is that we know a great deal about Shakespeare's life."

While it would certainly be a mistake not to concede that anti-Stratfordians have much to learn, one wonders why the supposedly objective Shapiro seems to devote so much time to detailing the alleged failures of one side in the authorship debate, but has nary a word to say, at least in his book's pre-publication commentary, about the many and glaring problems with the orthodox authorship account. This doesn't sound very "objective" to us. It also reminds us that Columbia is the school that ended Kenneth Burke's undergraduate career and catapulted him into the life of the independent intellectual who was not beholden to any special academic interests.

### **Folger Nabs First Folio Thief**

A recent *Washington Post* front page article on this story did not identify the accused man (Raymond Scott), a 51-year old antique/bookseller who lived only a short distance from Durham (UK) where he stole a Shakespeare First Folio edition from the University library in 1998. The man named Scott mentioned in the *Post* article is Garland Scott, manager of the Folger's external relations department, and no relation to the thief. The British press made the identification concerning Raymond Scott in a news item posted by Derran Charlton.

The *Post* gives a lot of details as to how the Folger handled the offer when Raymond Scott walked in the Folger Library on June 16 with no appointment and

asked the Library to check out his copy of the First Folio, which he pulled out of a big bag. Can you imagine? This is a very hefty work.

The Library staff, especially Richard Kuhta, was able to stall for more time to determine if it was authentic and then to identify which of the 230 extant copies it was. The thief was stupid enough to say "yes," and by June 26 the staff determined

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**The Library staff, especially Richard Kuhta, was able to stall for more time to determine if it was authentic and then to identify which of the known 230 extant copies it was. The thief was stupid enough to agree, and by June 26 the staff determined it was the edition missing from Durham University since 1998. Estimated value is about \$2.5 million.**

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it was the edition missing from Durham University since 1998. Estimated value is about \$2.5 million. Many of the 230 surviving copies, including the 79 owned by the Folger Library, are cannibalized editions.

The FBI was called in at that point. An arrest followed quickly in England.

— contributed by Peter Dickson

### **Beard of Avon Continues to Raise Consciousness, Garner Kudos...**

Amy Fried's *Beard of Avon*, recently

*(Continued on p. 16)*

(News, cont. from p. 15)

touring in Wilmington, NC, continues to arouse curiosity about the authorship question.

In an August 12 review, the *Wilmington Star-News* correspondent Nick White, reports that “When *The Beard Of Avon* by Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright Amy Freed first made its way onto the stage in 2001, the play of pleasant possibilities was faced with certain controversy.

“Freed farcically asks the question, “Will the real William Shakespeare please stand up?” It’s a query that continues to stir as much debate as the origins of Jesus Christ. An array of evidence surrounds the contention of the Bard’s authorship, including notions that his grandparents were illiterate and his parents semiliterate, that he did not attend university and that his attendance of grammar school is questionable. It is further noted that although a handful of Shakespeare’s masterpieces occur outside England, he never ventured beyond his country’s borders, and by some scholars’ standards there exists no physical evidence that he could even read or write.

“It is this handful of factors - and yes, there are more - that place the issue on the podium. How is it that one with this many literary disadvantages was able to craft the number of works he did - 37 at least - and with such mastery?

“This week, *The Beard Of Avon* comes into the mighty hands of Shakespeare aficionado Robb Mann, directing for Big Dawg Productions. As for Mann’s perspective on the “Who Wrote It?” war, he says, “The likelihood of us ever knowing the true history behind Shakespeare is infinitesimal at best. What matters is that (these works) were written at all.”

John Staton, writing in the *StarNews Online* on August 27, also gave the play a favorable review:

“One of the better performances to be seen on the local stage in recent months is currently being played out at Thalian Hall’s studio theater.

“In *The Beard of Avon*, a comedy by Amy Freed that explores the controversial authorship of the plays of William Shakespeare, local stage vet Steve Coley plays Edward De Vere, Earl of Oxford,

who is posited to have penned some of those works.

“As Oxford, Coley creates something of a brilliant monster, a dissolute sexual omnivore who is committed to his art but is doomed to work behind the scenes because he can’t have his noble name associated with the common folk of the theater.

In one great scene, he recalls murdering an underling who dared to criticize his writing.

“I’m haunted still,” Oxford says

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**“Freed farcically asks the question, “Will the real William Shakespeare please stand up?” It’s a query that continues to stir as much debate as the origins of Jesus Christ. An array of evidence surrounds the contention of the Bard’s authorship, including notions that his grandparents were illiterate and his parents semiliterate, that he did not attend university and that his attendance of grammar school is questionable.**

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wistfully.

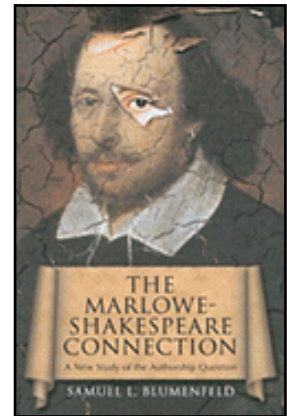
“Haunted by his spirit?” asks a confident.

“Nay, by his accusations.”

The production also received kudos on the major commercial website, Enotes.com, in an August 12 review by Scott Malia:

The Shakespearean authorship debates have their highs and lows. At best, they elevate the level of discussion about The Bard’s poetic style and the culture of Elizabethan England. At worst, they

can devolve into the equivalent of a shouting match: “Yes, he did!” “No, he didn’t!” “Wabbit Season!” “Duck Season!” Amy Freed’s play *The Beard of Avon* falls somewhere in between these two extremes. While the Pulitzer-nominated play (written in 2001) is meticulously researched, it is also replete with sharp humor. In short, it is very smart historical fiction. A current production of the play makes the case that the authorship question can be fun instead of antagonistic.



### Marlowe: Still Not Dead

*The Marlowe-Shakespeare Connection: A New Study of the Authorship Question*, by Samuel L. Blumenfeld.

McFarland publishers (Jefferson, NC), which published Bill Farina’s *De Vere as Shakespeare: An Oxfordian Reading of the Canon* (2005), have issued a new authorship book. According to McFarland, Samuel L. Blumenfeld’s book “theorizes that the true author of the works attributed to Shakespeare was in fact poet and playwright Christopher Marlowe; that Marlowe, who was reportedly a spy in the Secret Service, actually faked his own death, with several top people in Queen Elizabeth’s government involved, then continued writing for several years under the pseudonym of William Shakespeare.”

Right. I’m selling land in Arizona. Trust me. It has lots of water.

### Whittemore Sonnet Cycle Premieres

This time it's the world premiere of a one-man show called "Shake-speare's Treason," brought to you by Concordia University's Shakespeare Authorship Re-



search Centre, a group of folk who, like Amy Freed did in last season's hilarious *Beard of Avon*, suggests that Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, may have been the man behind the "speare."

Noting that next year marks the four hundredth anniversary of the first printing of the Sonnets in 1609, Whittemore claimed that the publication "quickly disappeared and remained underground for more than a century until 1711." Since

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then, he added, "these little verses have been perceived strictly as love poems, but, in fact, that's only one side of a double image. That's the romantic side of the Sonnets. The other side is political – and politically dangerous."

## **New Kids' Book Promotes Oxford**

Shakespeare Fellowship members Lynne Kositsky and Norma Howe seem to be trendsetters. A new kid's book by Elise Broach, *Shakespeare's Secret*, introduces de Vere as the real Shakespeare.

With a Shakespearean name like Hero, moving towns is never easy. At least this time there's the search for the missing Murphy diamond – rumoured to be somewhere in her new house – to take her mind off things. But that's not the only mystery. How come old Mrs. Roth knows so much about it? And why is Danny, the most popular kid in school, so eager to help?

Unless Hero and Danny can find the diamond, a centuries-old mystery will be lost forever – and with it a modern-day secret that could change all their lives

Thoughts: This is definitely a book for younger readers, but I still enjoyed reading it. It was quick and simple, but entertaining at the same time, with an interesting idea thrown into it, that Shakespeare (from Stratford) wasn't actually the writer of the famous plays, but was only a cover for a courtier called Edward de Vere, who was linked with Elizabeth I, Anne Boleyn and the missing diamond! I loved the twist thrown in at the end, of how a couple of characters were linked in a surprising way.

## **Noted Oxfordian Passes**

Frank O'Connell, perhaps best known as the first executive director at the John M. Olin Foundation, recently passed away at the age of 94. Frank served as a trustee of the Atlas Economic Research Foundation from 1989-1996. Below, we share an obituary written by James Peirson:

Francis A. ("Frank") O'Connell passed away last Sunday at his home in Grass Valley, California, at the age of 94. As the

first executive director of the John M. Olin Foundation and a longtime board member of National Review, he was an influential and widely known figure in the conservative movement. His death, like that of William F. Buckley, Jr., earlier this year, is another reminder that the generation of men and women that came of age during the 1940s and 1950s is now passing from the scene.

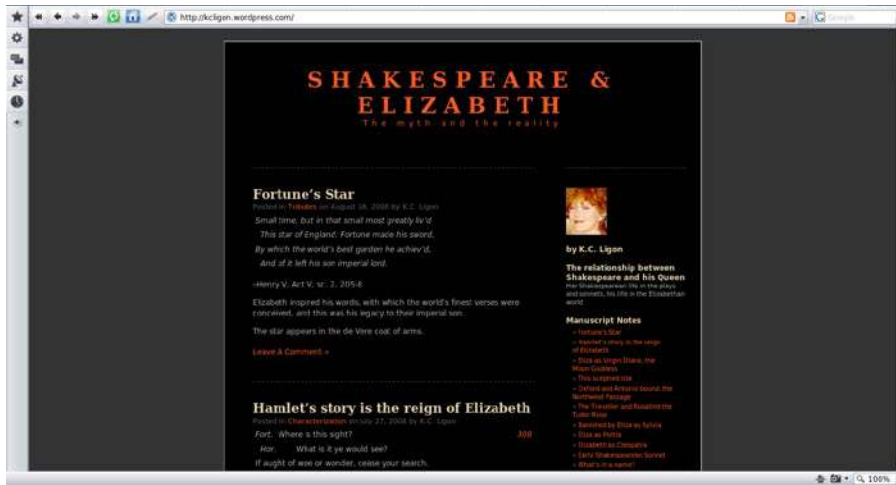
Frank, as noted, was a man of the old school, educated in another era, possessing a solid foundation in the classics and highly proficient in the Latin taught in the Catholic schools of his time. He recited from memory long passages from Shakespeare or from any number of poets. I was surprised to learn in conversation with Frank that he was an avowed Oxfordian — that is, he held that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, was the true author of Shakespeare's plays and poems, the real Shakespeare being incapable of producing such high works of art and philosophy. There is some considerable evidence to support this theory, and Frank was a forceful advocate of it. Though this was perhaps a weak point in Frank's intellectual armor, he defended it with an impressive arsenal of fact and conjecture. One had to be thoroughly versed in Shakespeare (which I was not) in order to contest the Oxfordian case against him.

## **New Globe Director "Debunks" Authorship Questionable**

Dominic Dromgoole, the new artistic director of London's Globe theatre, is in fine form. While Mark Rylance was collecting his Tony Award, Dromgoole was imparting some pearls of wisdom to local reporters. As reported by Joe Riley, at the Echo.uk.com in a July 18 article, Dromgoole dismisses the authorship question as "baloney": "The thing about Shakespeare not being Shakespeare is wonderfully entertaining. But it is also baloney," notes Dromgoole, debunking the conspiracy theorists who

*(Continued on p. 18)*





Fellowship Member and Former Trustee K.C. Ligon writes a regular blog on authorship at <http://kcligon.wordpress.com> (coming up in a future issue: Shakespeare in the Blogosphere).

(*Titus, Cont. from p. 2*)

say the plays come from the likes of Marlowe or the Earl of Oxford, illegitimate son of Elizabeth I.

Dromgoole is full of great ideas: “As for all the foreign references (including in *The Winter’s Tale*) and the idea that Shakespeare could not have known them, he adds: ‘Either in his ‘disappeared’ years in the late 1580s he made extensive trips, or he had reliable contacts.’”

“Don’t forget,” concludes Dromgoole, “London was already a very cosmopolitan city.”

Right. That explains everything.

### Authorship Blogs

A number of new blogs covering the authorship question have sprung up in recent months. Look for a detailed analysis in a future issue of *Shakespeare Matters*.

tion of authority. In both plays, Oxford calls upon the medieval concept of an ordered universe: authority comes from above (in *Titus*, the gods, the emperor, senators and tribunes; in *Romeo and Juliet*, God, the Prince of Verona, Father Lawrence, and the senior Montague and Capulets); the tomb looms below. The main playing area of lives and losses is wedged between these two fixed points.

Because I consider *Titus* a kind of primer, the comparison with *Romeo and Juliet* can be extended to a number of Oxford’s plays. Intense competition and the threat of violence often mark opening scenes. *Richard II*, for example, opens with two figures of power (Bolingbroke and the Duke of Mowbray) in the midst of a tense challenge. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* Egeus threatens to kill his daughter if she won’t marry the man he has selected. We could go on. The point is this: audiences are immediately drawn into a play whose first moments set out clear conflicts and grab out attention with sharp contrasts. *Titus* does just that—and does it brilliantly.

The first speaker is Saturninus, elder son of the Emperor who has died: Saturninus calls on “Noble patricians, patron of my right/Defend the justice of my cause with arms” (1.,1.1-2). Next, he

addresses the commoners: “And countrymen, my loving followers/Plead my successive title with your swords” (3-4). It is a play concerned with succession, one of the Elizabethans’—and Oxford’s—favorite topics. Who has the rightful claim to rule? We find this question raised again and again throughout the canon: in *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Richard II*, *Richard III* and *Henry IV*. It is, perhaps, the question all through Elizabeth’s monarchy: Who has the rightful claim to rule? Dan Wright has spoken persuasively on the topic of succession. In his catalog of plays concerned with succession—*Hamlet*, *King John*, *Lear*, *Cymbeline*—*Titus Andronicus* comes first. In *Titus Andronicus*, although Saturninus claims that his status as “first-born son” entitles him to rule, the second son (Bassianus) argues that the most deserving son should rule and asks for an election: “let desert in pure election shine, and Romans fight for freedom in your choice” (16-17).

The exciting differences between brothers—Saturninus and Bassianus, as well as Titus and his brother Marcus—are echoed in later plays: Edgar/Edmund (*King Lear*), Prospero/Antonio and Alonso/Sebastian (*The Tempest*), the Duke Senior/Duke Frederick and Oliver/Orlando (*As You Like It*), etc.

This technique of opposing characterizations is one of Oxford’s strongest dramatic achievements, and it goes well beyond that of brothers. In the much better known tragedy of *Othello*, for example, we find several contrasting pairs: the naive Desdemona/the experienced Emilia; Othello/Iago. *Titus Andronicus* offers a number of such pairs: Titus/Aaron, Lavinia/Tamora; the sons of Titus/the sons of Tamora. And contrast also informs entire groups: the courage, honor, and stubbornness of the Romans against the slipperiness, lies, and violence of their opponents. Contrasts also appear in setting: the city/the forest; then, the freshness of the dawn and beauty of the forest (2.2 and 3) accentuate the horrors that occur therein.

Horrors. We must talk about the catalogue of horrors this play throws at us: Tamora’s eldest son is dismembered



and executed; Titus slays one of his sons; Bassianus is stabbed to death in front of his wife, Lavinia; Lavinia herself is raped, her arms are cut off, her tongue is torn out; Aaron chops off one of Titus's hands. I've only reached Act Three and you know the story. But please note: *Titus* is not the only play with gore. Macbeth's cruel slaying of Macduff's family, the blinding of Gloucester, Hamlet's gratuitous murder of

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Polonius, Gertrude's poisoning, Richard's III gleeful acts of violence—was Oxford merely pandering to the tastes of his age? Was he well aware of the universal fascination with violence and retribution? Indeed, the genre of revenge tragedy was hugely popular, and we could spend much time tracing cycles of revenge from Ovid to Kyd and Marlowe, from *Titus* and *Hamlet* down to their present-day successors (think of Harrison Ford as *The Fugitive* or the Bruce Willis' *Die-Hard* series or Uma Thurman in *Kill Bill*). Revenge is not an exclusive domain of the males, for it is Tamora who says, "I'll find a day to massacre them all" (453).

*Revenge*. The word comes from the

Middle English and Middle French: as a verb, to re-venge; to inflict harm or injury in return for an injury or insult, to exact satisfaction for a sense of injury. The terms "blood tragedy" or "blood revenge" remind us of two factors: first, that there is often a blood link—the death of a son, daughter, parent, sibling or loved one triggers the impulse toward revenge—and, second, that murder is a bloody affair. "Now could I drink hot blood," says Hamlet when he is convinced that Claudius has murdered Hamlet Senior. For an audience or reader, this kind of bloodthirsty declaration both thrills and horrifies. Perhaps, in witnessing the taking of action, we counter our basic feelings of aloneness or helplessness.

Revenge tragedy, as a theatrical genre, was popular in Elizabethan England for several reasons: the influence of contemporary French and Italian stories of revenge; the availability of various translations of Seneca (1559-1581); the congruence with actual political intrigues of the times; and a society which expected violence and condoned revenge. Typically, an Elizabethan revenge tragedy is set in a foreign locale, often Italy; horrors escalate; there are realistic descriptions and displays of cruelties; ghosts can play a key role; there is a dumb show and/or test. Sequential cause and effect impels the action of revenge tragedy and provides a dramatic, emotional "hook" for the audience. Oxford understands the hypnotic, compelling hold of revenge. Titus asks: "What shall we do? let us that have our tongues/Plot some device of further misery" (3.1.133-34).

Although the play has received adverse criticism, David Bevington believes that its gruesome stage pictures of dismemberment are anything but gratuitous:

They give visual form to a tragic dilemma of communication. The hands and the tongue are our chief means of speaking to others—through gesture, writing, and speech. How is the mutilated Lavinia . . . to tell her family what she has suffered and from whom?

Lavinia, bereft of hands and tongue, must find a means of revealing what has happened to her. Her father, conversely, must learn to decipher a new language of action forced on his family by their

tragic plight. (29)

Lavinia's wordlessness is inherent in Oxford's Ovidian source, the tale of Tereus and Procne. Lavinia's uncle tenderly laments, "but sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee" (2.4.26) and calls her "Fair Philomel" (38). The overt classical references in *Titus* become a rich avenue of exploration for scholars, actors, and readers. And, for Oxfordians, these references from Ovid provide obvious, eloquent evidence of Oxford as author. Lavinia, in her fierce desire to communicate and to

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name her attackers, tosses a book to her nephew. Titus asks his grandson, "Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?" And the boy replies, "Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's *Metamorphosis*" (4.1.41-42). The title is spelled just as it is in Arthur Golding's 1565 translation: Golding, de Vere's uncle and tutor.

I've mentioned the relationship of *Titus Andronicus* to *Hamlet*. But for me, perhaps the most significant thematic link is between *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear*. Both plays focus on family, on man's bestiality, and on the madness induced by suffering and tragic loss. And, as in *Lear*,

(Continued on p. 20)

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

readers and audiences must question if they can find any human or moral frame of reference. Just as Lear calls Goneril and Regan “detested kite,” “vulture,” “boil,” “plague-sore,” Titus envisions Rome as a “wilderness of tigers” and calls Tamora’s sons “bear whelps.” These gross and grotesque images force us to assess our own society’s values: do we hold to the virtues of love, generosity, tolerance, and goodness? These virtues may seem missing in *Titus*’s Rome and *Lear*’s ancient Britain, but how

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do we judge the twenty-first century? In *Lear*, Cornwall’s treatment of the aged Gloucester is matched in *Titus Andronicus* by Aaron, who takes malicious pleasure in making the old war hero think that he can stave off his sons’ deaths by having his own hand chopped off. Today, we find similar victims of cruel mutilations in Rwanda, Kenya, and Afghanistan. And, alas, malicious acts of hatred and revenge do occur

in the United States.

Clearly, Oxford understood what is best and what is worst in human nature. And he understood when humans have suffered and can no longer endure. Thus, I am most moved, in *Titus Andronicus*, by a simple question – it may be a prayer – said by Titus’ restrained brother, Marcus, in soliloquy: “O heavens, can you hear a good man groan and not relent, or not compassion him?” (4.1.123-124). Seeing his maimed niece and his grieving brother, Marcus says, “Now is the time to storm,” a haunting foreshadowing of Lear’s raging in madness. In both plays, madness and feigned madness are juxtaposed against macabre comedy. Lear has legitimate grievances and wages a mock trial to prosecute his cruel daughters; Titus shoots arrows with letters to rectify the wrongs done to him. For these suffering men, there is a method to madness.

After Titus, it is Aaron who has the most number of lines (709 for Titus, 353 for Aaron), and Aaron is himself a fascinating portrait. There are just a few black characters in Oxford’s canon. We think of the self-centered Prince of Morocco, one of Portia’s suitors in *The Merchant of Venice*. *Othello*, of course, is entitled *The Moor of Venice*, and stagings often emphasize Othello’s African roots. But Aaron came first. America’s great nineteenth-century Shakespearean black actor, Ira Aldridge, portrayed Aaron a number of times in a version of the play that omitted “numerous decapitations and gross language” (Metz 158). Just as Edmund, Gloucester’s bastard son in *King Lear*, wins a bit of our admiration with his boasting and confidence, there is much we can find dazzling in Aaron. He does, after all, display fiercely protective love toward his son by Tamora, and is able to convince Demetrius and Chiron to see the child as their brother. Although Tamora has ordered Aaron to kill their infant, he instead slays the nurse who witnessed the child’s birth and instructs Demetrius and Chiron to substitute a white newborn for the half-black baby.

Thus, for those of us fascinated by Oxford’s various portraits of evil, Aaron is both diabolical and attractive; he is believable. Bevington states:

Aaron and Tamora are not the moral opposites of Saturninus and the Roman subjects, but are, instead, symbolic of the inner darkness and carnality shared by all sorts of people.

(Preface 941)

Leslie Fielder reminds us, also, of the Jewishness of the name Aaron, and points

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to descriptions in the play of Aaron’s being “misbelieving” and “irreligious” (178-179). The point is simply this: Oxford’s complex characterization of Aaron is a model for the motif of outsider, a motif which appears again and again. I suggest that Aaron be seen as a precursor for fascinating outsiders in the later plays: *Othello*, *Malvolio*, *Shylock*, *Caliban*. Aaron is the first.

My final comment is a structural one: Oxford’s use of the masque or “play-within-the play.” We think of Hamlet’s famous device of “The Mousetrap,” arranging for the players to insert lines in a play in so that the prince may “catch the conscience

of the king." Or recall Prospero's stunning masque of three goddesses to bestow wedding blessings in *The Tempest*. In *Titus Andronicus*' final act, there is a blatant, clever skit/masque in which Tamora appears at Titus' house as Revenge; her sons are Rape and Murder.

But Tamora underestimates Titus; he recognizes both the empress and the literal truth of the stage names, and the perpetrators of the crimes against Lavinia are finally punished.

As in the conclusion of *King Lear*, *Titus Andronicus* ends with the feeling of "a restoration of moral sanity after a terrible interregnum of evil" (Hill 63). In *Lear*, that restoration is centered in Edgar; in *Titus*, in the accession of Lucius. And, although Aaron is left to die, his infant son is spared. We are left with the hopes that this fictionalized version of Rome can embrace a half-black/half-white child—the hope that revenge has run its course and the next generation can live in peace.

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Lavinia, bereft of hands and tongue, must find a means of revealing what has happened to her. Her father, conversely, must learn to decipher a new language of action forced on his family by their tragic plight. ....Lavinia's wordlessness is inherent in Oxford's Ovidian source, the tale of Tereus and Procne.

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Waith, Eugene M. "The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*." 10. Cambridge, 1957, 39-49.

(Nuttall, cont. from p. 11)

was contemplating his own impending death as he wrote *The Tempest*, his guilt about his possible role in Marlowe's 1593 murder may solve Nuttall's riddles.

No one who writes on Shakespeare can avoid quoting him frequently, and at length. Who would dare to paraphrase our greatest writer ever? I am grateful that Nuttall quotes Achilles' speech to Ulysses in Act III, scene 3 of *Troilus and Cressida*. I had begun reading Douglas's (2007) exciting new book on ring composition while I was also reading Nuttall. Although no one, to my knowledge, has argued that Shakespeare used the fascinating literary structure of ring composition, there are strong hints of it in *Venus and Adonis*. Achilles' speech is a wonderful chiasmus, which Douglas tells us to look for in the middle of a ring composition. His speech occurs, in fact, midway through the *Troilus and Cressida*. It illustrates the mirror-image symmetry that occurs in both chiasmus (on a smaller scale) and ring composition (which is compositional symmetry on large scales). Achilles' speech begins and ends with the same phrase: "This is not strange." The mini-chiasmus of "eye to eye" is at the center of the speech, while "eye" itself is a palindromic word. Two words begin with the letter "b" in the second line; two words end with the letter "d" in the penultimate line-- more chiastic mirroring. The gist of the speech is that we need other people to reflect back to us objectively how we look, both literally and figuratively.

Achilles' speech, and the preceding lines, allude to mirroring repeatedly—"reflection"; "mirror'd"; "receives and renders back"; "speculation" (from *speculum*, Latin for "mirror"). But, as Vendler discovers repeatedly in the Sonnets, Shakespeare's words often enact their contents. The structure of Achilles' speech thus enacts mirroring, through the mirror-image of its chiastic structure. Since, as Nuttall admits, Shakespeare has always been there before us, I strongly suspect he recognized ring composition centuries before contemporary literary critics ever did. And he showed us that some of its origins are in human experiences with mirroring, in all their multifarious meanings.

Nuttall is trained in philosophy, and

(Continued on p. 28)

(*Coriolanus*, continued from p. 1)

“There is no concrete evidence as to date, and the attempts to find some have been far-fetched.”<sup>a</sup> More recently, Geoffrey Bullough, who also guestimated around 1607-1608, wrote that “the date of composition is doubtful.”<sup>b</sup>

Most everyone agrees that the version of the play known to us is a relatively late work for Shakespeare (based on style), probably dating from the early Jacobean period, that it was probably the last of his Roman plays, written after *Antony and Cleopatra*, and around the same time as *Timon of Athens*. Many think it was written around the same time as the Romances, which were also first printed in Folio of 1623. As to precise dates, however, no one can say for sure, and the best scholars have always openly admitted this.

For many of us, the crux of the Oxfordian theory—that the traditional Shakespeare was in reality a hired front man for a pen name used by Edward de Vere (and perhaps others as well)—is essentially a two-pronged argument. The first prong is that de Vere himself lived a very Shakespearean life; that is, there appear to be hundreds of parallels between his documented biography and Shakespeare’s story lines, many of them very unusual. A second is the astonishing number of connections between Shakespeare’s agreed-upon source material and books personally associated with de Vere in one way or another. Shakespeare’s favorite books seemed to be those that were dedicated to de Vere, written by him (such as his preface to *Cardanus Comforte*), written by his relatives or circle of patronage, books dedicated to his family (which included the First Folio itself), or books that we know he personally owned or to which he likely had direct access. It is as if Shakespeare the writer was borrowing books from Edward de Vere. Moreover, whenever Shakespeare the writer needed a storyline, it seems that he always turned to the real-life biography of de Vere for inspiration.

Before talking about literary sources, a word on topical references. Whenever there is a scarcity of data on anything—and such is certainly the case with Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*—the human tendency is to read too much into too little. Here

we have a play that no one would have known about had it not been for the First Folio, and a playwright—the traditional Shakespeare—of whom we know next to nothing, at least as an artist. Consequently, we are in the worst of all possible worlds, so to speak. Let’s look at just a few examples. In Act I of the play, the plebes are rioting

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because of a food shortage in Rome, and historically in England, there were similar riots over corn shortages during the winter of 1607-1608, particularly in the Midlands around Warwickshire. So critics like to latch onto something like this as so-called proof of a composition date. The problem is there were similar riots in 1557 in Oxfordshire,<sup>c</sup> and before that as well. Rather than recite all similar previ-

ous disturbances, let’s just step back for a moment and use some common sense. Was 1607 likely to have been the very first riot in England over food shortages? It’s the *Tempest* argument all over again. Was 1609 the first time there was an English shipwreck in the Bermudas? Of course not, and the point is that with topical references, one has to be very careful to not overlook the obvious. For one, in *Coriolanus*, we need to remember that Shakespeare’s main source, Plutarch, mentions food shortages in Rome as well.

Another example: one line in the play mentions (in passing) coal fires burning on ice (I.i.173). Such coal fires were reported on the frozen Thames during the same winter as the corn riots in 1608.<sup>d</sup> An illustration from Thomas Dekker’s *The Great Frost*, published in 1608, shows a little coal fire on the ice of the frozen Thames.<sup>e</sup> Frank Kermode, writing in the Riverside edition, noted that the last time the Thames froze up had been in 1565.<sup>f</sup> Too early to be Shakespeare, right? So these critics get all excited and say that *Coriolanus* must have been written in 1608, and then they start looking for all these other things that happened during that narrow time frame, and whenever they find a remote similarity, it is rolled out as an ironclad proof. I think Oxfordians should beware of falling into that same trap. Many of these topical allusions, by the way, were first noticed by Edmund Malone during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the old school critics were much more cautious about these things.<sup>g</sup> Regarding coal fires on ice, naysayer Edmund Chambers cautioned that, “Shakespeare may, of course, have seen this before, on a smaller river.”<sup>h</sup>

One more topical example: Harold Bloom has written that *Coriolanus* is Shakespeare’s most political play,<sup>i</sup> and a good argument can certainly be made for that. Many scholars have rightfully noted similarities between the story of *Coriolanus* and the Essex Rebellion. These commentators have included both orthodox scholars such as Frank Kermode<sup>j</sup> and, more recently, Oxfordians such as Mark Anderson.<sup>k</sup> In 1601, after the execution of Essex, one William Barlow in London preached a sermon that made an express comparison between Essex and Coriolanus, although Barlow specifically referenced Plutarch’s

*Coriolanus*, not Shakespeare's.<sup>1</sup> My view is that Shakespeare the author may have begun writing about Essex obliquely in the play, but ended up writing about himself, as he usually did in everything—and as great dramatists generally tend to do. If de Vere was in fact Shakespeare the writer, he may have come to the uncomfortable realization that he and Essex had far more in common than either one would have ever cared to admit.

As for indirect literary allusions, there is only one good example that has ever been identified. The only thing resembling an indirect, period allusion to *Coriolanus* came in 1609 when Ben Jonson's play *Epicoene* was published. Jonson seemed to spoof a line from *Coriolanus* in which Shakespeare had written: "And in the brunt of seventeen battles since he lurch'd all swords of the garland" (2.2.101). Jonson turned this into, "You have lurch'd your friends of the better half of the garland."<sup>m</sup> That's pretty close, and we know that Jonson liked to do that sort of thing with Shakespeare, so we know *Coriolanus* was probably written sometime before 1609. Beyond that, we have little to go on, apart from the style which, as stated before, most agree is typical of Shakespeare's later works.

For this play one literary source towers over all the rest, and that of course is Plutarch's *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans*, first translated into English by Thomas North and published in 1579. Shakespeare the writer definitely used this book because several passages in the play are taken verbatim from North's translation. As for Plutarch himself, it is worth repeating—and I am about the millionth person to make this observation—that Plutarch uses the lives of Coriolanus and Alcibiades as parallel Roman and Greek cautionary tales. Alcibiades includes the story of Timon of Athens, and Shakespeare's *Timon* includes Alcibiades as one of the main characters. Unquestionably Shakespeare the writer was very attracted to this section of Plutarch. Plutarch begins his life of Coriolanus by noting that men

like Coriolanus who lose their father at an early age often use this as excuse for their own erratic behavior. Does this remind us of someone—Hamlet, maybe? How about Edward de Vere, whose father died when he was 12 years old? We should also remember that Coriolanus was not exactly a major figure in Roman history; in fact, most historians now question whether he ever existed, since there is no mention of him before the hagiographies of the imperial age. And yet Shakespeare, late in his career, was drawn to this very



Ta sage instruction fert de riche couronne  
A Trajan, esleué par dessus tous humains.  
Si les grands te portoient au cœur & dans leurs mains,  
Vertu viuroit au lieu de Venus & Bellone

#### The Renaissance Plutarch:

**"If great men would bear you in their hearts and in their hands, virtue would live in place of lust and war."**

obscure and disturbing tale. Anyway, that *Coriolanus* and *Timon* are closely related to each other in the canon is something that almost everyone accepts.

What is rarely discussed, however, is that the North translation of Plutarch was not based on the Greek original of Plutarch. As North himself informed his readers, he based his translation on the classic 1559 French translation of Plutarch by Bishop Jacques Amyot. Amyot was one of the greatest of the Renaissance humanists, tremendously admired by just about everyone. In addition to Plutarch, Amyot translated Longus' *Daphne and Chloe* and

Heliodorus' *Aethiopian History*, both also acknowledged as Shakespearean sources. Later, the first English translation of *Heliodorus* by Thomas Underdowne in 1569, as most Oxfordians know, was dedicated to the 19-year-old Edward de Vere. The biggest connection, though, between Amyot and de Vere, is that shortly after Underdowne's translation of Heliodorus was published, de Vere, still 19-years-old and convalescing at Windsor Castle, purchased a copy of the Amyot Plutarch. This is a documented fact, as the record for the transaction still exists in Lord Burghley's account books.<sup>n</sup> Now I pose a hypothetical question: what if it were suddenly revealed that we had a documented record of the 19-year-old Will Shakspeare purchasing a copy of the Amyot Plutarch, as opposed to say, begetting twins with Anne Hathaway in Stratford? Or what if it were suddenly revealed that the nineteen-year-old Will Shakspeare could speak and write French, the way we know de Vere could? I'll tell you what would happen. The Shakespeare industry would seize upon it and flood the market with articles, books, movies, plays—the works. And yet we know for a fact that the teenage de Vere personally owned one of the most important source books for the entire Shakespearean canon, and hardly anyone ever mentions it.

Another author usually cited as a secondary source for *Coriolanus* is William Camden. Here we see Camden's best-selling work, *Britannia*, the first topographical survey of England. It was published in 1586, the same year Edward de Vere first received his mysterious lifetime annuity from the English crown. Nineteen years later, in 1605, Camden released a sequel and supplement to *Britannia*, appropriately titled *Remains of A Greater Work*. In the *Remains*, Camden makes a single passing reference to Shakespeare the writer, lumping him together with all the other great Elizabethan poets. This was the one and only time in his very long and prolific writing career that Camden ever saw fit to mention Shakespeare. In 1607, Camden

(Continued on p. 24)



(*Coriolanus*, continued from p. 23)

did not even see fit to mention Shakespeare in his list of famous people from Stratford. That is odd because, as Ramon Jiménez has pointed out, Camden was otherwise a compulsive name-dropper of poets and famous people. Camden, as Jiménez fittingly described him, was an eyewitness who saw nothing.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Arden

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**I am not here to tell you that Shakespeare the writer absolutely did not use Camden as source for this episode; on the other hand, I do feel obliged to point out a few things. For starters, Camden did not exactly make this story up. It had been a very popular fable even from ancient times. For one, it is found in Plutarch, although Plutarch does not use all of the same details as Camden and Shakespeare. It is also found in Philip Sidney's *Apology for Poetrie*, published in 1595. It is also found in the Latin historian Titus Livy, who predated Plutarch.**

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editor Philip Brockbank asserted, "that they [Camden and Shakespeare] knew one another is probable."<sup>10</sup> In the *Remains*, Camden also recited the famous fable of the stomach used by Shakespeare in *Coriolanus*, in which the other body parts complain about the stomach consuming everything while they do all of the work, just as the Roman plebes complained about the patricians hoarding all of the food. Camden's *Remains* is usually cited

as Shakespeare's direct source for the fable because there are allegedly unique similarities in wording. For example, both Camden and Shakespeare describe the stomach as a "gulf," and both name the human heart as a kind of mediator between the stomach and other body parts. Acknowledging Camden as a source seems to create a problem for Oxfordian dating because, according to the standard biography, de Vere died in 1604, one year before Camden was published. Moreover, the fable of the stomach is not an insignificant part of the story. As Marjorie Garber has written, the "fable is central to the play in many ways."<sup>11</sup>

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As for Camden, if we read him, what exactly does he say? Camden says that the fable of the stomach was not his own invention: rather, he was repeating it from John of Salisbury, who wrote during the

12<sup>th</sup> century, and who said he heard it from Pope Hadrian IV, who, incidentally, was the first and only English pope. Professor Brockbank, again writing in the Arden introduction, notes that Camden not only took the story from Salisbury's book *Policraticus*, he pretty much did a direct and straightforward translation of Salisbury's Latin.<sup>14</sup> The Newberry Library in Chicago has a particularly attractive edition of this work published in 1595. By the way, where was Camden accessing his

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source materials like John of Salisbury? Well, we have a pretty good idea. Camden dedicated *Britannia* to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, one of his main patrons throughout his career, and whom Camden expressly thanked for his support and encouragement. Burghley himself, who was also de Vere's long-suffering father-in-law, had one of the best libraries in England. Now if there is anyone who thinks that de Vere somehow did not have access to these same books, then they are going to have to explain why. Or what was to stop

Camden and Shakespeare from reading each other's manuscripts, especially if it took Camden so long to publish his sequel work? We hear orthodox scholars use that argument all the time — that Shakespeare may have seen something in manuscript form before its official publication. To deny the same possibility for de Vere is a double standard.

For argument's sake say that Camden's 1605 *Remains* was in fact a source for the play. Every reasonable person agrees that more than one hand was involved in writing the Shakespearean canon, it's only a question of who the main author was. So let's say Will Shakspeare was the main author. If it were proven that one piece of one play was written after 1616 when Shakspeare died, would we stop giving him main credit as the author? Of course not—and especially if the manuscripts were in the possession of people like the Herbert family and Mary Sidney, who was an accomplished dramatist, poet and editor in her own right. And then finally, I think we have to give a nod to the recent research of Christopher Paul, who has shown there is at least a possibility that de Vere did not really die in 1604 but may have lived incognito for a few more years. This is because there are several letters mentioning his name in the present tense as if he were still alive, written by people who should have known whether he was in fact alive.<sup>4</sup> Given all the other murky details surrounding de Vere's death, we should at least acknowledge the possibility. To say it was definitely this or definitely that, given the overall scarcity of data, is just not being open minded.

Finally we come to the question of biographical parallels to *Coriolanus*: Geoffrey Bullough posed the question: "What led Shakespeare to write this play on a comparatively minor and early figure in Roman history?"<sup>5</sup> It's a good question that Bullough never really answers, even after summarizing the alleged topical references. Edmund Chambers concluded that it had little if anything to do with the death of Will Shakspeare's mother Mary Arden in 1608.<sup>6</sup> Philip Brockbank marveled that if the opposite were true, then *Coriolanus* would be "a strange and inept memorial."<sup>7</sup> A few years ago, Richard Whalen made

the rueful prediction that there was going to be a flurry of new books trying to connect Shakespeare's storylines with the traditional Shakespeare biography, and this unfortunately has come to pass, and is still continuing. *Will in the World* by Stephen Greenblatt—I am surprised he did not title it, "Where There's A Will There's

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a Way"—this book has virtually nothing meaningful to say about *Coriolanus*. The irrepressible Michael Wood, on the other hand, who always interprets everything as the little guy beating long odds, is true to form in his docudrama coffee table book, *Shakespeare*. Wood launches into a four-page discussion of the 1607 grain riots,<sup>8</sup> but, as Professor Brockbank rightfully

noted long before, when all is said and done, these riots were not "close enough in circumstances to be of service in dating the play."<sup>9</sup> More recently, René Weis, in *Shakespeare Unbound: Decoding A Hidden Life*, spends several pages trying to connect the play with the death of Will Shakspeare's parents, totally ignoring the skepticism of older critics like Chambers and Brockbank. Devoid of any new observations, Weis also regurgitates the long-forgotten surmise that a single line in the play is an allusion to a ditch digging project in London begun in 1609, writing as if this was the first time anyone had dug a ditch in Renaissance England.<sup>10</sup> All of these recent studies, incidentally, are very difficult to verify anything with because they do not use footnotes—and are written by men teaching at major universities. Think of what would happen to Oxfordians if they tried writing a book without footnotes.

Recently my wife and I watched an old movie, *The Long Voyage Home*, a 1940 John Ford film about the merchant marines, with a screenplay based on the work of Eugene O'Neill. We watched it and thought, gee, this is the most realistic movie about sailors and sea travel that we had ever seen. And we are not the first viewers to have that reaction. Then we remembered that Eugene O'Neill was himself, early in life, a merchant marine. Why should Shakespeare the playwright be any different?

Like other great Renaissance writers (Montaigne, Cervantes, etc.), Shakespeare the writer ultimately wrote about his own experiences. In *Coriolanus*, the main themes are there for everyone to see: the missing father, the surrogate father, the troubled passive-aggressive mother-son relationship, the meek-subservient wife, the wild young son, the aristocratic arrogance of Coriolanus himself, the rejection by his peers, his divided political loyalties, his exile from society—on and on—all of these perfectly fit the documented biography of Edward de Vere, as any casual student of his biography well knows. And he traveled to Italy where the play is set. For those who are not students of de Vere's biography, I spell these parallels out in my book and won't repeat them here. I

(Continued on p. 26)

(*Coriolanus*, continued from p. 25)

will, however, quote the assessment of Coriolanus as a character by Frank Kermode and Wyndam Lewis from *Riverside*: “a particularly cheerless...snob, such as must have pullulated in the court of Elizabeth—a schoolboy crazed with notions of privilege, and possessed of a ‘demented ideal of authority.’...He is an ugly political innocent: ‘What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent.’ There is no gap between his crude mind and his violent tongue. And such men are dangerous.”<sup>ab</sup> I am surprised Profes-

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Marjorie Garber was a bit more kind: Coriolanus] is “repressed; devoted to authority; committed to male bonding, fellowship, risk, and danger; slightly over punctilious; impatient or condescending toward perceived social inferiors; awkward and even unhappy in situations that require small talk, gracious manners, accommodation, compromise, and a show of feeling.” She adds:

“It is also worth noticing that once again in a Shakespearean play we have an absent parent, in this case the father...In a way, all of Shakespeare’s tragic heroes are in search of names—in search of their own hidden names, which will also be their deaths.”<sup>ac</sup> Not a bad analysis, and again it reminds us of someone. *Coriolanus* and *Timon* are indeed both bitter, harsh plays, and I propose that Shakespeare the writer (de Vere) turned to those subjects late in life because that is exactly how he felt. Just as Shakespeare’s earlier plays, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *All’s Well That Ends Well*, are both, in essence, unflattering portraits of the artist as a young man, *Coriolanus* and *Timon* are unflattering portraits of the artist as an older man. As Harold Bloom wrote in reference to these two works, “Shakespeare...experimented with essentially unsympathetic protagonists, though his genius found ways of making them sympathetic despite themselves.”<sup>ad</sup>

In conclusion, I offer no final answers about who wrote Shakespeare, but I do know this: it is a real issue—one that needs to be taken far more seriously than it has been in the past by most professional academics and performers. I also know that when we compare the traditional biography of Shakespeare to the traditional author’s connections to the source materials for *Coriolanus* (or lack thereof), and then do the same for Edward de Vere, well, let’s be honest—there is no comparison. De Vere had all of the ingredients—the troubling and tragic personal experiences (many of which were of his own making), as well as direct, stunning, connections to the main literary sources. His downside was that he was not a nice person or a poor boy made good or a blank slate to be filled in like Will Shakspeare of Stratford. As a person de Vere was messy and difficult, and many people have a problem with that. As I wrote in my book, to answer the question why the Bard was fascinated by Coriolanus among the entire galaxy of outstanding Roman personalities immortalized by Plutarch, one must turn to the authorship question in order to find answers.

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- b Bullough, Geoffrey, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), Vol. V, p. 453.
- c Garber, Marjorie, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Pantheon, 2004), p. 778.
- d Kermode, Frank, Introduction to *Coriolanus* from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Second Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), p. 1440.
- e Kermode, p. 1443.
- f Kermode, p. 1440.
- g Brockbank, Philip, Introduction to *Coriolanus* from *The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1976), p. 24.
- h Chambers, p. 479.
- i Bloom, Harold, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), p. 577.

**(Coriolanus, cont. from p. 26)**

- j Kermode, p. 1441.  
 k Anderson, Mark, *"Shakespeare" by Another Name: The Life of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, The Man Who Was Shakespeare* (New York: Gotham Books, 2005), pp. 312-313.  
 l See Kermode (p. 1441) and Anderson (p. 313).  
 m Kermode, p. 1440.  
 n Nelson, Alan, *Monstrous Adversary* (Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 53.  
 o Jiménez, Ramón, "Camden, Drayton, Green, Hall, and Cooke: Five Eyewitnesses Who Saw Nothing," *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (Shakespeare-Oxford Society), Fall 2002.  
 p Brockbank, p. 24, n.2.  
 q Garber, p. 783.  
 r Garber, p. 760. Chambers acknowledged this possibility as well (see p. 480).  
 s Anders, H.R.D., *Shakespeare's Books* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1965), p. 108. Special thanks to Dr. Earl Showerman for drawing my attention to this work.  
 t Brockbank, p. 24.  
 u Paul, Christopher, "A Monument Without A Tomb: The Mystery of Oxford's Death," *The Oxfordian* (Shakespeare-Oxford Society), Vol. VII, 2004.  
 v Bullough, p. 454.  
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 x Brockbank, p. 26.  
 y Wood, Michael, *Shakespeare* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), pp. 297-300.  
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 aa Weis, René, *Shakespeare Unbound: Decoding A Hidden Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007), pp. 369-372.

- ab Kermode, p. 1440.  
 ac Garber, pp. 789-790.  
 ad Bloom, p. 581.

**(Seventeen Oxen, Cont. from p. 7)**

time, fortune, do co-here and jump/ That I am Viola (5.1.243-47). " See Marprelate, *Hay Any Worke* (March, 1589): "I, for jesting is lawful by circumstances even in the greatest matters. The circumstances of time. place and persons urged me there unto"; *Epitome* (Oct 1589): "The circumstance of time, place and persons"; *Defence of Job Throckmorton* (Apr. 1594): "Eyther of time, place, persons or circumstances" (Quoted in Carlson 300). "Jump" is a Marprelate word meaning promotion, viz. *Master Some Laid Open* (Sept. 1589): "...to fetch a jump from his benefice at Girton to some sweet Deanry or Bishopricke, it was sure to be one of the pretiest jumps that ever he made in his life...How thinke you by these jumps?" (see Leland H. Carlson, *Martin Marprelate, Gentleman: Master Job Throckmorton Laid Open in His Colors*. San Marino, Ca.: Huntington Library, 1976, 259).

<sup>8</sup> *A Countercuff given to Martin Junior*. Anon/Oxford. 8 Aug 1589.

<sup>9</sup> Spenser's *Astrophel* (1595) has Stella die simultaneously with Sidney.

<sup>10</sup> Aubrey, John. *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed Oliver Lawson-Dick, 1949.

<sup>11</sup> Jonson, Ben. *Every Man Out of his Humour*. Performed 1599.

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*(Nuttall, cont. from p. 21)*

I appreciated that aspect of his academic background more and more as I traveled through his unique book. Can you tell that I love Nuttall's book? I hope that comes through, in spite of a minor quibble I have with him about authorship. I have given you only a small taste of the many treats in his impressive book.



Who is this man? Find out on p. 3.

A book should be written on Shakespeare's Pub. Someone has claimed that the Stratford grammar school offered the equivalent of a graduate level education. That's absurd. It was the pub. What an amazing pub! Pubs today are different. But back then, many pubs were more or less like Ivy League colleges. And Shakespeare's pub was like Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study. Shakespeare would walk in, sit down, and tell the proprietor, "I'll have a pint. So, what's new on Ophite Gnosticism? And, by the way, can you go by boat from Verona to Milan?" — Richard Waugamun (see p. 8)

"Now I pose a hypothetical question: what if it were suddenly revealed that we had a documented record of the 19-year-old Will Shakspere purchasing a copy of the Amyot Plutarch, as opposed to say, begetting twins with Anne Hathaway in Stratford? Or what if it were suddenly revealed that the nineteen-year-old Will Shakspere could speak and write French, the way we know de Vere could? I'll tell you what would happen. The Shakespeare industry would seize upon it and flood the market with articles, books, movies, plays—the works. And yet we know for a fact that the teenage de Vere personally owned one of the most important source books for the entire Shakespearean canon, and hardly anyone ever mentions it."

—William Farina (see p. 1)

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