Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship"

12:3 "Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments..." Summer 2013

Jacob Karlsson Lagerros, winner of the 2012 Shakespeare Fellowship High School Essay Contest.

Bringing Truth to Light – Why it Matters Who Wrote William's Words

by Jacob Karlsson Lagerros

According to the legend, Richard Burbage, the most famous actor of Shakespeare's day, was once asked to visit a lady at home, dressed as Richard III. When Burbage arrived at the Lady's door, he loudly exclaimed that "King Richard III is come." However, he did not receive the expected response. From within the apartment resounded a surprising – but all too familiar – voice, proclaiming "Please inform the gentleman that William the Conqueror came before Richard III" (Chambers, 212). But it was not the voice of a conqueror. It was the voice of another William, of even greater reputation.

There exist few – if any – literary figures of such magnitude as William Shakespeare. His writing has had an enormous impact on the ideological development of the modern western civilization. Linguistics, ethics, literature and philosophy would not have been the same if he had not decided to put pen to paper in Elizabethan England. Yet, as in the case with Burbage, it has not always been clear exactly who it is that hides in that house

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2012 Essay Contest Winners Announced

by Bonner Miller Cutting

The 2012 Shakespeare Authorship High School Essay Contest was co-sponsored by the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society, as part of the organizations' outreach to high school teachers and students all over the world. It provided a source for information about the Shakespeare Authorship Question and a venue to encourage discussion. Over sixty essays were submitted this year, and many additional inquiries were received at the Shake_a_spear email address.

The contest committee is grateful to Dr. Robin Fox, Dr. Ren Draya and Sarah Smith for judging the essays, six of which were chosen to receive monetary prizes. It is a tribute to the international appeal of the Shakespeare Authorship Question that two winners are from countries outside the United States. The first place win-

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Shakespeare Beyond Doubt or *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* You Decide

The spring of 2013 saw the publication of two books about the Shakespeare Authorship Question with deliberately similar titles. The first to appear was *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt: Evidence, Argument, Controversy*, edited by Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, published by Cambridge University Press. The second, which came only a few weeks later, was *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt? Exposing an Industry in Denial*, edited by John Shahan, founder and chairman of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, and British author and researcher Alexander Waugh, published by Llumina Press.

The two books are similar in format, each with chapters on specific aspects of the SAQ from various contributors. *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* boasts that twenty-three "distinguished scholars"

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From the President:

"Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds Admit Impediments"

In the spring, I joined with John Hamill, president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, in announcing a proposed unification of our two organizations. We sent a Notice of Intent to members of both organizations outlining the general guidelines for unification, and we asked for your comments. Your responses overwhelmingly supported the idea of the two groups joining forces. Many commented favorably on the proposed new name for the unified group, the "Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship."

After receiving these encouraging messages, we have continued to work on details of a unification plan, which includes a projected budget for the new group and a new set of bylaws. We believe that these changes will make us more efficient and allow us to do more for you, our members. Once we have completed these detailed plans and they have been approved by the boards of both groups, we will send copies of them to you with instructions on how to vote yes or no to the proposed unification. We hope to do this within the next month or so. It will be your votes and the votes of members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society that will ultimately determine whether the two groups will work together as one.

Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?

In the last few months, two books with similar titles but opposing viewpoints have been published. The first book, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt: Evidence, Argument, Controversy*, edited by Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells, presents the traditional Stratfordian view of authorship. As one might have predicted, it speaks condescendingly of its opponents, shows little familiarity with anti-Stratfordian arguments, and disparages those who question the authority of orthodox scholars. Since this book represents an almost-official statement on authorship from the Shakespeare establishment, it exposes their weakness. Can this be the best argument they can make for the Stratford theory: presumption, *ad hominem* attacks, and condescension? My review of the book appears in this issue.

The second book, edited by John Shahan and Alexander Waugh, is *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt? Exposing an Industry in Denial* (note the question mark in the title). (Full disclosure: I wrote one of the chapters in this book, and three other Shakespeare Fellowship trustees, Bonner Miller Cutting, Earl Showerman and Alex McNeil, contributed as well.) I am proud of the work that we have done, and I believe that our book is better reasoned and more persuasive than the Stratfordian book.

I believe that the publishing of these two books almost simultaneously may be a watershed event in the history of the authorship controversy. After years of ignoring authorship skeptics, the Stratfordians have started to pay attention. They have taken up the gauntlet thrown down by anti-Stratfordians, particularly the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the Stratford man is the true author. Their book was a chance to prove their case once and for all, and I believe that they have fallen far short of that goal.

I strongly encourage you to become familiar with *both* books. It is important to know the arguments that our opponents are using as well as our own arguments. It is also important to understand the tactics that the Stratfordians use. Many Oxfordians have been active in online forums in posting their views on both books. Feel free to join in this activity. I believe that most intelligent, open-minded people who read both books will see for themselves which side is making a serious attempt to discover the truth.

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship is to promote public awareness and acceptance of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), and further to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication into all aspects of Shakespeare studies, and also into the history and culture of the Elizabethan era.
The Society was founded and incorporated in 2001 in the State of Massachusetts and is chartered under the membership corporation laws of that state. It is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit (Fed ID 04-3578550).
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Shakespeare Matters welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Fellowship as a literary and educational organization.

From the Editors:

A Brief History of Anonymity

We're all familiar with the approach taken by John Thomas Looney to discover the real person who lay behind the name "Shakespeare." It was the approach Sherlock Holmes would have employed: using deductive reasoning and drawing reasonable inferences from the evidence contained within the works themselves. Starting from the apodictic proposition that an author reveals himself in his writings, Looney reasoned that the true Shakespeare was, among other things, a member of the nobility, had had financial difficulties, was considered eccentric, and had likely published literary works before adopting the Shakespeare name. Looney's reasoning led him to Edward de Vere, and, as he studied what was known about the elusive earl, he found that it fit all of the criteria Looney had posited about the true author Shakespeare.

But did you know that the same approach was taken a century earlier to discover the true identity of another British author – one who was wildly popular and who hid behind the cloak of anonymity? That author was Sir Walter Scott, whose first six *Waverley* novels were all published with no author's name. At the time, there was much speculation about the author's identity, who was sometimes called "The Great Unknown." Scott himself seemed to enjoy the interest; in the introduction to the third edition of *Waverley* in 1814, he invited his readers to wonder if it was the work "of a poet or a critic, a lawyer or a clergyman, or . . . like Cerberus – three gentlemen at once." Scott was "outed" in 1821 by a young English barrister, John Leycester Adolphus, in *Letters to Richard Heber, Esq.: containing critical remarkes on the series of novels beginning with "Waverley" and an attempt to ascertain their author*. Using the same approach that Looney would later adopt, Adolphus reasoned that the author was (among other things) a poet, was intimately familiar with Edinburgh, exhibited a particular "quaintness of expression," and was especially fond of dogs. Two things are especially interesting about Adolphus' work: first, he published his own findings anonymously, and second, he did not actually identify Sir Walter Scott by name. Instead, Adolphus wrote that the author of the *Waverley* novels was also "the Author of Marmion." It was a short step for Adolphus' readers to make the connection, as *Marmion* had been published a dozen years earlier with Scott's name on the title page.

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Scott was flattered by the attention, and got in touch with Richard Heber (to whom Adolphus' anonymous work was addressed), asking him to let the author know of Scott's appreciation. Eventually, Scott and Adolphus met, though even then Scott did not directly divulge that he had indeed written the novels. Later, in 1827, Scott did publicly acknowledge his authorship. He stated that for years, only his wife and his printer knew of his secret (even his teenage daughter knew nothing about it), and that, by 1827, no more than twenty persons knew about it, none of whom had broken the confidence.

The information on Scott comes from John Mullan's very informative book, *Anonymity: A Secret History of English Literature* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

Though Mullan barely mentions Shakespeare (and never in the context of the name as a pseudonym), his work nevertheless sheds light on some aspects of the Shakespeare Authorship Question. First, Mullan reminds us that anonymous publication was extremely common well into the nineteenth century. Second, Mullan observes that there is little if any practical difference between anonymous and pseudonymous publication: "If we are interested in how speculation about authorship was part of what it was to read, then the distinction between anonymity and pseudonymity will often be indistinct or even immaterial. If a pseudonym signals that the true author is in hiding, you might say that the work is anonymous" (6).

As Mullan surveys, many works that we now associate with a named author were originally published anonymously or pseudonymously, including Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock," Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (published in 1719 as by "Written by Himself," but readers were told in the novel's first sentence that "Robinson Crusoe" is not the narrator's real name), Jane Austen's novels (none of which was published during her lifetime bearing her name), Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," Charlotte Bronte's

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

Time to Book the Toronto Conference!

Plans for the October 17-20 SF/SOS Joint Conference in Toronto are moving along "apace" according to conference organizer Don Rubin, a professor at York University in Toronto.

"We are expecting over a hundred people and a number of students from the two sponsoring universities – York and the University of Guelph. They are covering the costs for most of the students, a really good sign.

"One of the highlights will be a public debate on Saturday morning featuring two prominent Oxfordians and two prominent Stratfordians. We are hoping that it will be taped for later broadcast on CBC radio.

"On Friday night," said Rubin, "many of us will be going to the Stratford Festival (about a two hour bus ride) to see a production of *Merchant of Venice* and to meet with the director of the production, Antoni Cimolino, who is also the new Artistic Director of the whole Festival. He probably has as many questions for us as we will have for him.

"We'll also be showing a new German video based on Richard Roe's book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, and we plan to hold the Canadian premiere of the Wilson sisters' documentary film, *Last Will. & Testament*.

"I expect eighteen papers to be presented, with keynote papers at the Saturday and Sunday lunches. Speakers will include Tom Regnier, Earl Showerman, Alexander Waugh, Ron Hess, Michael Egan and Sky Gilbert, a well-known Canadian playwright and director. There will also be a number of first-time speakers and some major names on the list, which is not yet finalized.

"The Metropolitan Hotel Toronto, where the conference is being held," said Rubin, "is a beautiful boutique hotel right in downtown Toronto. It's about two blocks from Yonge Street, the center of Toronto. It's close to the Eaton Centre (one of the largest shopping malls in Canada), local theatres, subways, lots of good restaurants. The airport bus stops right in front. We've arranged a good rate. People can stay up to three days before and three days after at the same rate. Rooms must be booked in advance to get the rate, which includes free internet and local telephone calls and use of the health club for about $156 US per night. Mention the reservation ID – 269-931 – or the SF or SOS. Telephone for reservations is 800-668-6600."

The preliminary schedule follows:

Thursday afternoon, Oct. 17. Registration, welcome and paper presentations. Possible video showings in the evening.

Friday, Oct. 18. Paper presentations. At about 3 p.m. the bus leaves for the Stratford Festival where we will meet with the director of *Merchant of Venice*, have dinner on our own and then see a performance of *Merchant* in the Festival Theatre. Back to Toronto by 1 a.m.

Saturday morning, Oct. 19. Public debate: "Shakespeare Unbar(re)d: Oxford versus Stratford." Open to the public. Followed by lunch for conference attendees with Keynote speaker.

Saturday afternoon. Paper presentations and video showings.

Saturday evening. Free night.

Sunday morning, Oct. 20. Business meetings of SF and SOS. Paper presentations.

Sunday, noon to 2. Closing lunch for conference attendees with Keynote speaker.

Conference registration forms can be found on the SF and SOS websites:

www.shakespearefellowship.org

www.shakespeare-oxford.com

Full conference tuition is $225 and includes two sit-down lunches, catered coffee breaks, all paper presentations and keynote addresses, business meetings, the public debate, and printed materials. It is also possible to register as a student or per day. Student registrations do not include the two lunches. Per day registrations are $50 for Thursday and/or Friday; $75 for Saturday and/or Sunday and do include the lunches.

Stratford tickets are $60 ($75 with bus transportation) and must be ordered through the online registration by Sept. 15.

Questions should be addressed to Prof. Rubin (drubin@yorku.ca).

New Musical Work Inspired by Oxford

Cellist, vocalist and artist Melora Creager is creating a narrative musical work inspired by the madrigal songs of Thomas Weelkes, informed by the theory that Weelkes was another artistic identity of Edward DeVere.

Inspired by theories originated by Katherine Eggar, Eric Altschuler, and William Jensen, this new work, "Fa La La- The Bastardy of Shakespeare's Madrigals," is a song-cycle for four cellos, three voices, percussion, and digital looping. Creager's alternative cello ensemble Rasputina channels Ladies-in-Waiting to Queen Elizabeth I, reinvents Early Music, and challenges concepts such as "classical/popular" and "true/false."

Thomas Weelkes published 65 songs within three years. Such a large, sudden output implies that the work was complete and "on file." It is challenging music -- beautiful, complex, and moving --all within a two-minute song form.

Weelkes' texts and dedications include complex puns, presumptuous comments to nobility, the originating of words, references to Shakespeare characters, inclusion in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, and perhaps dead giveaway, a falconry metaphor.

Weelkes' negligible qualifications and nonexistent biography make him uniquely unqualified to have written the songs credited to him. Historians agree that the music of Shakespeare is unknown. Creager believes that Weelkes' music could actually be "scores" to early versions of the plays, perhaps even for the final "Shakespeare" plays themselves.

"Fa La La" also contains new music by Creager. The madrigals originated "word-painting." By collaging lines from Shakespeare, original narrative, and deVere's own teenaged poetry, Crea-

Rasputina's Melora Creager, as Lady Gossamer Snakenborg, 7th Mistress of the Leash, in "The Bastardy of Shakespeare's Madrigals."

ger creates "song-painting,"a bigger picture constructed from disparate yet sympathetic sources -- ultimately, the voices of Elizabeth's Ladies in Waiting telling the story of how this music might have been created.

By referencing the Sumptuary Laws, Ovid's beauty advice, and horror stories of Elizabethan hygiene, Creager includes her trademark black humor. Onstage use of iPads for music-reading makes for a space-aged elegance, while perilously high platform shoes tip the hat to deVere's multitudinous Italian imports, and cello-bow sword-fighting is seen for the first time on any stage.

As Rasputina, Creager has been an originator for the cello in popular music. Rasputina has been sharing historical concepts with rock music fans since its inception in the 1990s. The band already has a wide following, especially within "Goth" youth culture, and will be exposing the Oxford heresy to an entirely new and youthful audience via the Weelkes concerts and recording.

A "Fa La La" album will be recorded this summer, and Creager looks forward to touring the project next year.

The cast includes:

Melora Creager (Rasputina, Nirvana) as Lady von Snakenborg
Julia Kent (Antony & the Johnsons) as Mistress Bridget Manners
Luaren Molina (Broadway's *Sweeney Todd* and *Rock of Ages*) as Penelope Deveraux
Daniel De Jesus (Rasputina) as Viscount Alessandro de Medici
Sara Landau (Julie Ruin) as Mistress Ursula St. Barbe.

De Vere Trail Tour Report

On June 18, two dozen American Oxfordians, led by organizer Ann Zakelj, met up with several members of the *Neue Shake-speare Gesellschaft* at the Radisson Blu hotel in Stansted, England, to begin the Edward de Vere Trail tour. Sponsored by Pax Travel of London, the tour group included a number of Shakespeare Fellowship trustees as well as *Brief Chronicles* general editor, Professor Roger Stritmatter.

The comfortable facilities, knowledgeable tour guides, travel arrangements, historic sites visited, and especially the fellow Oxfordians who turned along the trail provided what could only be called, to use a British term, a smashing success. The important sites visited during the first week of the tour included numerous medieval churches built by or containing tombs of the Earls of Oxford, Castle Hedingham, Hatfield House, Westminster Abbey, as well as the ancient towns of Lavenham, Wyvenhoe, and Earl's Colne.

On Sunday, June 23, the De Vere Society hosted a very special event for our group and had a daylong conference at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, arranged by our colleague Dorna Bewley and chaired by Kevin Gilvary. Bonner Cutting, Jennifer Newton, Earl Showerman, and Roger Stritmatter all gave presentations on their research and projects. The group was treated to tours of King's College Chapel as well as a special visit to see Sir Thomas Smith's books and artifacts at Queens' College Library. The day concluded with repeated rounds of excellent libations at Cambridge's most renowned pub, The Eagle.

Along the Trail, the group was greeted with great hospitality by DVS members Graham Ambridge and his wife Sue, Charles Bird, Richard Malim, Eddi Jolly, Elizabeth Everett, and Heward Wilkinson. After the basic seven-day tour ended, about half the group continued the adventure for another four days with visits to Stamford, Burghley House, Bosworth Battlefield, Wilton House, and Hampton Court. A full report on the tour with photos will appear in the next issue of *Shakespeare Matters*.

Authorship Discussions in Portland

From Earl Showerman: Joella Werlin and Terwilliger Plaza, a retirement community in Portland, OR, have graciously hosted several evenings of presentations on the Shakespeare authorship challenge over the past year. Last year I spoke on Shakespeare's remarkable medical knowledge, and this April Roger Stritmatter joined me for a lively discussion on censorship and political allegory in Elizabethan times, and on the subject of secrecy, a topic that clearly fascinated Shakespeare.

Werlin had been piqued by the irony in Adam Gopnik's uninformed statement that "Shakespeare never wrote a play about anyone who was alive to protest," published in a recent *New Yorker* article on Galileo; whereas Oxfordians appreciate how the dramas were often highly critical of contemporary court figures, including Queen Elizabeth and her Prime Minister, and, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* the controversial French Duke of Alencon and his entourage. Given the strict censorship enforced by the Revels Office and the Stationers Guild, I asked how did Shakespeare escape punishment for so boldly mocking Elizabeth and prominent members of both the English and French courts? Jonson, Marlowe, Chapman, Kyd, Nashe, and Hayward all were interrogated and imprisoned, but why not Shakespeare?

Stritmatter pointed out that "Political allegory requires a degree of secrecy, and while the role of the passion for secrecy in history is a topic that clearly formed a major thematic element in many of Shakespeare's plays, Renaissance scholars have rarely acknowledged it as relevant to the genesis of these plays. Still less are they inclined to consider the prominent role that calculated misdirection and equivocating truth-telling have played in the early modern rhetorical tradition."

Terwilliger Plaza resident Jerry Lindgren later wrote, "Many,

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many thanks for your fine presentations on the Shakespeare authorship controversy here at the Plaza a short time ago. You did attract a good crowd, too, I am happy to say, and there was a buzz afterwards as people exchanged reactions." Joella Werlin

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expressed gratitude that her friend, Jan Powell, founder and director of the Tygre's Heart Shakespeare Company, attended on her invitation. "Jan, alas, was unmoved by your persuasive insights into the hilarious satire in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. She sadly stands her ground that 'the texts' don't 'feel' like de Vere or Bacon or any of the others, that there's 'a different sensibility at work'… I say 'sadly' because my intoxication with Shakespeare's language began while attending her Tygre's Heart productions in Portland's intimate Winningstad Theatre. When the actors were up to the challenge, one could hang on every word. My comprehension was often uncertain, but close in dramatization helped illuminate meaning, although each play stood by itself, other than the specific historic sequence that brought them together.

"What has changed since being led to Edward de Vere is that I hear an active storyteller, a real human being who, alone or with colleagues, is writing and dramatizing ingenious tales. As inscrutable, often despicable, as I find him to be, I am mesmerized by Oxford's brilliance. He tantalizes me with his manipulations of history; fascinates me with evocations of court life and intrigues he has experienced, by what is openly concealed or subtly revealed; lures me with his travels to recognizable but strange places, and enthralls and appalls me with his exquisite, sometimes savage, characterizations of 'real' people on the stage of his imagination."

Werlin, who did graduate study in social anthropology at Oxford and later became a professional oral historian, finally described how "these rivulets of consciousness have merged in my wont to know the storyteller, to assess the veracity and motives of the informant. Maybe some of Shakespeare's works arise totally out of dispassionate imagination, but certainly not the sonnets or the great tragedies."

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Shakespeare Fellowship Nominating Committee for 2013, consisting of Earl Showerman, Bonner Miller Cutting and Lynne Kositsky, has nominated the following persons for office:

For trustee (three-year terms, commencing in October): Alex McNeil, Michael Morse, Jennifer Newton.

For president (one-year term, commencing in October): Tom Regnier.

Alex McNeil and Michael Morse are currently serving as trustees, and are being renominated. McNeil is a retired attorney, lives in suburban Boston, and currently edits *Shakespeare Matters*. Morse is also an attorney, living in Memphis. Jennifer Newton is being nominated to succeed Bonner Miller Cutting, who has completed two consecutive three-year terms as trustee.

Jennifer Newton reports that she has long been fascinated by the Shakespeare authorship mystery, and her particular interest is in communicating the discoveries made by authorship scholars to a wider audience. Jennifer established The Shakespeare Underground website (www.theshakespeareunderground.com) to create a forum for sharing authorship research with the general public. Here, she interviews a variety of authorities and seeks a balanced view while inquiring into Shakespeare's historical and literary context. With a background in web and graphic design, media production, and arts administration, she is excited by the potential of emerging technologies to showcase complex ideas and reach an enthusiastic global audience. She lives in Seattle, where the rain provides an excellent excuse to stay inside and read.

Tom Regnier is being renominated to serve a second one-year term as president. He is an attorney who lives in the Miami area.

In view of the fact that the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society are in the process of forming a new organization (see *Shakespeare Matters*, Winter 2013 issue), the terms of office listed above may be shortened for the president and for some or all of the trustees, as not all trustees of the Shakespeare Fellowship will serve as trustees of the new organization.

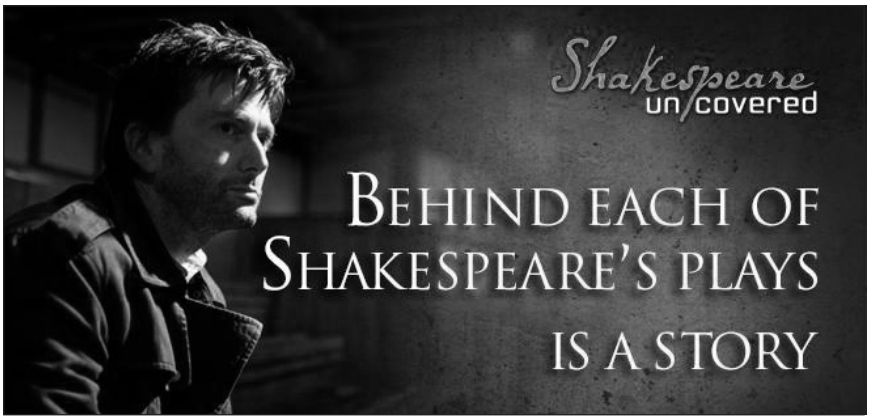
If no other nominations are received, these four persons will, as provided the Shakespeare Fellowship bylaws, be deemed to be elected to office at the annual meeting in Toronto in October 2013. The bylaws also provide that nominations to office may be made by petition. For more information on nominating by petition, please write to the Shakespeare Fellowship (P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale MA 02466) or email trustee Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net. Any nominations by petition must be received by September 17, 2013.

Television Review

Shakespeare Uncovered (PBS, 2013)

reviewed by James Norwood

The six-part PBS series *Shakespeare Uncovered* is lively and informative. Its strength is in the area of production history and performance studies. In the early programs on *Macbeth* and the comedies, there was good background on famous Shakespearean actors (Orson Welles as Macbeth; Charlotte Cushman as Rosalind; and the Redgrave clan). There were also clips from a terrific recent production of *As You Like It* at the Globe in London.



PBS' promotion begs the question: the series obviously doesn't know *what* the story *is* — but isn't above shilling to pretend it does.

The major weakness of the program is an inability to come to terms with the Shakespeare authorship question. It was especially disappointing that Joely Richardson, the narrator/hostess of the program on the comedies, offered a routine summary of the standard Stratfordian biography. There was no mention of alternative candidates. Didn't she learning anything from being in the movie *Anonymous*? Another shortcoming of the series was the commentary. The remarks of the professors (Stephen Greenblatt, Marjorie Garber, Gail Kern Paster et al) were cringeworthy. Jonathan Bate discussed the motif of the author's use of twins in such plays as *Twelfth Night*. Speaking with conviction, Bate informs the viewing public that the recurring use of twins derives from the fact that "Shakespeare" was fondly recalling his own twins (Hamnet and Judith), which inspired Viola and Sebastian. Once again, a Stratfordian has crossed the Shapiro "line" by discussing autobiographical implications of the plays.Unless scholars come to terms with authorship, their criticism will inevitably be shallow, flawed, and, in the case of Jonathan Bate, ludicrous.

The second program in the series addressed the history plays, specifically the tetralogy of *Richard II, Henry IV, parts 1 & 2,* and *Henry V*. Again, there was outstanding commentary from British actors and directors. There were also excellent clips from productions, including a pouty, adolescent Ian McKellen as Richard II in a rare television adaptation. Derek Jacobi and Jeremy Irons were the narrator/hosts of the two programs. They provided incisive analysis of their experiences in playing the respective roles of Richard II and Henry IV. In a scene filmed at Castle Hedingham, Jacobi went out on a limb by suggesting that Edward de Vere is the most likely candidate as the author of the plays. Unfortunately, the segment was so brief that no background was provided on de Vere's life and the evidence pointing to his qualifications for authorship. As a doubter, Jacobi comes across as a harmless eccentric, especially when Jonathan Bate asserts with authority that the actor Shakespeare wrote his plays from the inspiration of working in the theater and from observing the world of the court as an outsider when his acting company gave royal performances. But the interviews with the actors in the program actually undercut Bate's argument. A young actor who performed Richard II recently at the Globe described how Richard is undergoing an "identity crisis," as apparent in the prison soliloquy of Act V.

Instead of relying on a nearly verbatim transcription of Holinshed, as the author does for the description of Salic law in *Henry V*, the prison scene of *Richard II* is the author's original, heartfelt interpretation. Of course, the theme of identity crisis is at the heart of Charles Beauclerk's study, *Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom*, as he explores how the author was writing about his own crisis in the plays. The series failed to follow through in examining how the most original psychological insights of the author (and the most memorable moments in Shakespeare's plays) could only have derived from personal experience—not from the world of the imagination and not from casually observing court life from a distance. In one of the defining moments of the program, Jeremy Irons raised the question of the author's motivation for writing the English history plays. The program's superficial response was that, as a commercial playwright, the author realized they would be popular in the public theaters. But it was also apparent from the program that the author's motivation was in fact much deeper. The reality of a Tudor writer presenting risky, subversive topics in a public forum was underscored when the program stressed that *Richard II* offered "a ringside seat to one of the scandalous

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(Winning Essay, cont. from p . 1)

of literary masterpieces. In the last centuries literary scholars have begun doubting the traditional view on the authorship of the Shakespeare canon, even denying that it really was William himself who wrote it.

This meticulous scrutiny has prompted some to claim that "it doesn't matter who wrote Shakespeare." However, that supposition is completely unfounded. Shakespeare's identity is highly relevant, and that is due to three main reasons: Firstly, it is intrinsically tied to how we perceive and understand his work. Secondly, due to the size of his legacy his life story has long-reaching social, cultural and ethical implications. And thirdly, attributing Shakespeare's work to the wrong author would cause radical changes to those societal structures that are built upon his legacy. Shakespeare matters because the impact he has had on western civilization is too vital to be constructed on a lie.

Comprehending the work is not merely to perform an elaborate exegesis on a given text. Instead, the process has often been helped and advanced through a method of intertextual interpretation: the act of reading the plays not as separate entities, but as components of a whole; merging different worlds and stories together to form a Shakespearean universe of lives and ideas. This process is extremely useful, as it illuminates nuances and themes that are too subtle to perceive in a single text.

1. Understanding Shakespeare's Work Through his Person

Is it possible to understand Shakespeare without knowing who he was? One might surely understand him in the sense of knowing what is happening on the stage, who is who and what he intends with his often peculiar language (doubling adjectives when one would suffice, inventing words etc.). But can one really perceive what, so to speak, *made the plays what they are*? What wretched anger or soothing love was it that he channeled and shackled within iambic pentameter? From what steaming abyss of emotion did Lear and Iago burst into being? The answers to these questions vary depending on who is the claimed author.

Different attributions also alter the response to another significant problem: *Why* did Lear and Iago burst into being *at all*? Shakespeare's message and ideological agenda undoubtedly rely on what person he was. Just as irony and sarcasm may be undetectable if done by a certain person in a certain context, and completely obvious in another; the private life of Shakespeare says a great deal about what his characters tell us when they are not directly speaking. The authorship question is undeniably meaningful since our entire perception, view and understanding of the *raison d'être* for the Shakespeare canon transform when we attribute it to different writers.

The topic of understanding furthermore provides additional evidence for the need of an authorship debate. Comprehending the work is not merely to perform an elaborate exegesis on a given text. Instead, the process has often been helped and advanced through a method of intertextual interpretation: the act of reading the plays not as separate entities, but as components of a whole; merging different worlds and stories together to form a Shakespearean universe of lives and ideas. This process is extremely useful, as it illuminates nuances and themes that are too subtle to perceive in a single text. However, it is also dependent on the life of the writer. He assumes the role of god over this newborn universe; every move and action has meaning not only in its worldly direct context, but also as the result of a divine motive and will. Your reason, endeavor and ideas – as is easily perceived throughout history – changes drastically depending on your god.

2. The Social, Cultural and Ethical Impact of Shakespeare's identity

Why doubt that William Shaksper (who also spelled it Shaksper, Shakspe, Shakspere and Shakspeare) of Stratford-upon-Avon wrote the Shakespeare canon? What skepticism made Mark Twain reflect on the Stratfordian arguments in his merciless 1909 satire *Is Shakespeare dead?*, finally stating that "an Eiffel Tower of artificialities rise sky-high from a very flat and very thin foundation of inconsequential facts" (Twain, Chapter III), few enough that "you could set them all down on a visiting-card" (Twain, Chapter II). Both Shaksper and his authorship rivals are long dead, and neither has any distant relatives looking to regain their honor or rightful place in history. But the debate is persisting and growing, indicating how it is a subject cared about and revered by many. The main untraditional contestant for the authorship is Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, who lived between 1550 and 1604. In every part of the canon where Shaksper's life fails to explain the text, De Vere's elucidates it perfectly. The meticulous knowledge of Italian customs and locations, advanced legal terms and processes, royal intrigues and falconry present is absolutely remote to Shaksper's life, yet corresponds perfectly to de Vere's. (Shakespeare Fellowship, Chapter 7)

There is, however, an unyielding reluctance to support the Oxford theory, even in the midst of a rampant maelstrom of evidence. It seems that a great many adherents to the orthodox tradition have erected romantic ideals as massive bulwarks against the Oxfordian floods. The bard from Avon gains support from the most unforeseen direction – Americanism. When the former editor

of the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Dr. Gail Kern Paster, argued the traditional view at a Smithsonian seminar in 2001, she summed up her final statement by appealing that "We as Americans have no reason" to doubt the authorship (Niederkorn). The alleged story of William Shaksper of Stratford-upon-Avon is in fact intimately tied to the American dream. It is the story of a man who lacked education, world experience and noble background, but instead was blessed with an unparalleled imagination and the pen of a god; who labored day and night to bring his dreams to life, and ended up buying the largest estate of his hometown – settling down as the hero of both his nation and generation (Twain, Chapter III). When Paul Edmondson of *The Guardian* writes a fierce defense of the Stratfordian viewpoint, he – just like Dr. Paster – cannot close without offering a comparison of Oxford ("notorious for his violent aggressiveness, rich at birth but impoverished at death, an aristocrat who ruined his estate through nothing else than his own carelessness") and Shaksper ("He didn't go to university. He wasn't an aristocrat. He was from fairly humble origins and worked hard at what he was good at").

This Americanism provides social reasons to why it actually matters who wrote"Shakespeare." For many people living today, the reading of *Macbeth* or *King Lear* is a mere act of wading and plowing, through endless archaism and unintelligible soliloquys. The man behind the works appears as such a foreign figure, hiding in his linguistic swamps, that it seems impossible to find any satisfaction in his alien work. If then, however, that man is capable of identification: if the reader can perceive someone like himself – sharing his struggles, joys and fears – behind the pen, those forbidding opuses immediately turn more appealing. It is a harsh truth that a majority of people simply will not read the manuscripts of a 400-year-old playwright for the sole sake of their poetry. Thus the story of Shakespeare's life matters, as it might spread (or hinder the spread of) his work to those who otherwise never would have discovered it.

Today Shakespeare is a brand; a trademark. In the modern culture of mainstream theater, one does not merely watch a play, one watches *Shakespeare*. A giant cultural industry has been built around that mysterious, distinct English, intellectually ringing: [ʃeɪkˌspɪr]. Ponder the amount of tickets sold if a theater were to stage two "different" plays the same night: *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare and *The Tragedy of the Danish Prince* by Edward de Vere. Poor Edward would have his masterpiece acted out in front of a vanishingly small gathering of brave avant-gardists and subtly giggling professors. Attributing Shakespeare's work to de Vere would (at least beyond dogmatic academia) turn out a seamless transition; however, reprinting it and replacing every mention of the traditional author would possibly ignite a commercial crisis. This issue is cultural, economic and pragmatic, pertaining in no way to artistic and esthetic subject matter, yet it cannot be overlooked.

The authorship dilemma is also an ethical one. Orthodox scholars like to claim that questioning the traditional attribution is an act of jealousy, an inability to cope with how one man could possess such talent and produce such a vast array of brilliance. As the aforementioned Paul Edmondson puts it, "it denies the power of the human imagination." Because if Proust could and Tolstoy could, why could not Shakespeare? Taking a stance on the authorship dilemma suddenly means choosing a position in questions far exceeding its apparent realms. If you choose your

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(Continued on page 10)

(Winning Essay, cont. from p . 9)

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3. The Consequences of Misattributing Shakespeare

To demonstrate the possible impact a change of author might have on societies, look at the probably most influential text of all time – the Bible. Whenever a community withholds its holiness and claims it to be the word and will of God, its themes and notions spread like wildfire. Laws are constructed according to the teachings of Jesus, the style of psalms becomes the ideal way of writing poetry and the events of Noah's Ark and the Garden of Eden determine how history is constructed. Yet, at the advent of secularization – in other words, when the idea of the authorship changes from divine to dilettante – those societal structures are radically transformed. A change that is minimal within its direct context spawns a butterfly effect razing the systems that had been built upon it. Even though the Stratford vs. Oxford debate does not concern divinity, a huge part of Western civilization does rest on Shakespeare's work. He gave us our language and our literature. He gave us a view of the history of his own age and had an impact on the history of his future. He taught practical ethics to millions of men and women. It would have devastating consequences for our entire conception of history if the traditional attribution of his work was wrong. In that case not only the direct Shakespearean institutions but also every idea and system built around him would crumble.

Is it not an axiom of esthetics that a true work of art must be able to persist apart of its creator? When a spectator is agonized by the grief of Othello, riveted by the madness of Hamlet or immersed in the "infinite jest" of *Twelfth Night* – how can anything make a difference but the very magic of the moment? There are, however, "more things in heaven and earth than are contained in Rylance's philosophy." In that exalted moment of experiencing the essence of drama there might not be much else that matters, yet plays of such magnitude as Shakespeare's have relevance far beyond the stage of the Globe Theatre. The act of viewing the plays is only a part of a larger process. To claim that nothing matters but the text is to be ignorant of what literature is capable of.

4. Why Shakespeare is supposed not to matter – and why such an idea is absurd

When Mark Rylance, multiple Tony Award winner and longtime Shakespeare interpreter, was faced with the dreaded question of the Shakespeare authorship question he responded that "One of the fortunate things about this Shakespearian thing [authorship] is that it's totally unimportant." He refers to the "enormous personal pain and suffering" that had to be endured in order to craft those timeless masterpieces, and how the question deprives them of the attention they deserve. Those tales – playing out from the raging seas of Illyria to the haunted hallways of the castle Elsinore – are too vibrant and tragic, too magnificent and "full of sound and fury," to fade behind a pile of scholarly quibble. Shakespeare's poetry, not his identity, is what matters. Then why is not Rylance justified in his outburst? Is it not an axiom of esthetics that a true work of art must be able to persist apart of its creator? When a spectator is agonized by the grief of Othello, riveted by the madness of Hamlet or immersed in the "infinite jest" of *Twelfth Night* – how can anything make a difference but the very magic of the moment? There are, however, "more things in heaven and earth than are contained in Rylance's philosophy." In that exalted moment of experiencing the essence of drama there might not be much else that matters, yet plays of such magnitude as Shakespeare's have relevance far beyond the stage of the Globe Theatre. The act of viewing the plays is only a part of a larger process. To claim that nothing matters but the text is to be ignorant of what literature is capable of. As noted in sections 2 and 3, Shakespeare extends far beyond his words.

The Bard of Avon is not the only author with universally celebrated writing but a life shrouded in mystery. There are pivotal figures in Western literature whose lives historians know close to nothing about. Homer, for example, who might be the single most important figure of ancient literature, has a biography veritably unknown beyond myth and legend. Yet his work is widely read, cherished and meticulously analyzed. There is an epitaph on the tomb of the great English architect Sit Christopher Wren that reads "Si momentum requires circumspice." Located in the heart of his magnum opus, St Paul's Cathedral, the inscription tells nothing about his life or virtues. It simply urges the observer to turn away: "Reader, if you seek his monument, look about you." Those words greatly elucidate the supposed relation between an artist and his art that would deny the importance of our question. Even if an

author's life might change the way we understand his writings, what insight does it provide that we cannot do without?

No one ever claimed *The Odyssey* to be incomprehensible because we lack concrete facts about Homer. Yet there is certain knowledge every scholar claims is crucial for that understanding – the knowledge of Antique culture and religion. If we then apply the same standards to Elizabethan era England, we find that what we need to comprehend its poets is its philosophy; its beliefs, rituals and customs. And when it comes to Elizabethan culture, we do know a lot. If there ever were texts with the ability to stand alone, resting only on their greatness and the zeitgeist that spawned them, would they not be Shakespeare's? However, this argument fails as the problem is not the mysterious circumstances of the poet's life, but rather the act of accidentally attributing his work to another poet, someone who may not even be a poet at all. Transferring the attribution of a work does not necessarily give us new insight into it, but it undoubtedly changes the view we already have. As noted in section 1, the intrigues of Shakespeare's universe may not depend on who he was, but the meaning and message of it does.

Conclusion

It definitely does matter who wrote "Shakespeare." His work has had an undeniable importance in the creation of the modern society. An impact so large, in fact, that we cannot risk it to be based on a lie. Yet, in the end, the hunt for that elusive man may not even be about him. When asked if it matters who wrote Shakespeare, one might respond that "Yes, it does indeed – the same way it matters who wrote the gospels and who signed the Declaration of Independence." Every false prophet ultimately faces his iconoclasm. The fundamental principle of all academia, and even knowledge itself, has been, since the foundation of the Academy of Plato, to search for truth and pursue history solely for its own sake and value. In order to understand the postmodern ocean currently whirling us away, we first have to comprehend the movements of the earth that enraged the sea in the first place. As that enigmatic English bard – who at the present moment shall go unnamed – wrote in *The Rape of Lucrece:*

> "Time's glory is to calm contending kings,
> To unmask falsehood
> And bring truth to light"
> (939-940)

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(Contest Winner, cont. from p. 1)

ner, Jacob Karlsson Lagerros, is a student at the Viktor Rydberg Gymnasium in Stockholm, Sweden; an honorable mention was awarded to Rachel Grewcock, who attends the Loughborough High School in the UK. Essays came in from all over the United States. The second place winner is Rachel Woods of Centennial High School in Franklin, TN; third place went to Hayley Hohman of Mount Spokane High School in Mead, WA. Catherine Wu of Southwest Guilford High School in High Point, NC, and Olivia Barnett, who attends Nightingale Bamford School in New York City, also received honorable mentions.

In addition, many fine essays were submitted by the students of Anna Scarpino of New Urban High School in Milwaukie, OR, and Brenda Ballance of St. John Neumann Catholic High School in Naples, FL. These teachers are doing special work to instill critical and analytical thinking skills in their students, as well as developing an understanding of literature.

Many Oxfordians participated in preparing the contest questions, rules, guidelines and the recommended reading list. An effort was made to direct students to several websites, including Keir Cutler's Mark Twain video, the *New York Times* article by William Niederkorn and Roger Stritmatter's article in the *Washington Post*. It was gratifying that these sources and others were cited in many of the essays.

By a fortuitous coincidence, SF Trustee Don Rubin, who had already planned to be in Sweden in May, was able to personally deliver Jacob Lagerros' first-place check to him at his school in Stockholm. Rubin presented the $1000 check to Jacob at a special ceremony at the Viktor Rydberg Gymnasium. Rubin spoke about the importance of the authorship issue to the school's third-year class and school officials, and read several excerpts from Jacob's essay. Jacob was also presented with flowers by the school, one of Sweden's most prestigious high schools, and one which students compete academically to attend.

"I read about this contest online," said Jacob. "It had a cash prize and seemed extremely interesting to me because I love

(Continued on page 12)

(Contest Winner, cont. from p. 11)

Shakespeare. I didn't know anything about the authorship issue so I researched it on my own. I am really happy that my essay was considered so highly. I think the fact that I won this award and that Professor Rubin managed to come to Sweden to speak to my school about the subject will attract others to be interested. I am especially happy to have also been made a member of the two organizations."

Titled "Bringing Truth to Light," Jacob Lagerros' essay (see p. 1) deals with the perennial question why it matters "who wrote Shakespeare." As Jacob argues persuasively, "Shakespeare matters because the impact he has had on western civilization is too vital to be constructed on a lie."

Oxford's Death: Suicide or Multiple Coincidences?

by Charles F. Herberger

In a letter to the editor in the Summer 2007 issue of *Shakespeare Matters*, I suggested that John Rollett's solution to the cypher of the Sonnets dedication ("THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER [E. VERE]") was incomplete because decipherment was not carried to the end of the dedication. I also suggested that instead of counting both periods and hyphens as signals for stops that only periods should be counted. Using only periods and counting to the end gives the solution: "THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER-LIVING WELL-WISHING T[IME]." The meaning would be that Oxford was still living and, foreseeing his death, is hopefully wishing that in time the cypher will be solved and his authorship recognized along with his true relationship to "Mr. W. H.," the "onlie begetter" of the sonnets.

This, of course, assumes that it was Oxford himself who contrived the peculiar format of the dedication page and its hidden cypher. Let us explore that possibility. The strange shape of the word images has been called "inverted pyramids." Instead, I suggest that they were meant to be heraldic shields. Symbolizing whom? Let's leave that unanswered for the moment and look at the shield's line numbers, 6-2-4, which provide the cypher clue. Why did Oxford choose that formula, rather than another numerical sequence? By a different choice of words and a different numerical formula the same basic message could have been conveyed.

It has been suggested that the 6-2-4 formula was derived from the number of letters in Oxford's name: Edward (6), de (2), Vere (4). That's plausible. But could 6-2-4 also refer to a date, June 24, which is Midsummer Day? Curiously, this is the date which some proponents of the Prince Tudor theory believe was the birth date of Oxford's son by Queen Elizabeth, who was raised as Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. Warren Dickinson writes in *The Wonderful Shakespeare Mystery*, "The conjectured date of Henry's birth (24 June 1574) coincides closely with Oxford's bolt to the continent" (133-34). That Midsummer Day was celebrated on 24 June, rather than on the astronomical solstice of 21 June, is attested by the OED ("Midsummer Day 24 June, one of the recognized quarter days in England and Wales").

However, there is still another mystery about this date. As a record of the church of Augustine in Hackney shows, Oxford died on June 24, 1604. The words "the plague" are associated with the entry. It is, therefore, generally assumed that he died of the plague. But how strange a coincidence that 6/24 should happen to be, in 1604, (a) the alleged thirtieth birthday of Southampton, (b) a Midsummer Day, (c) the day of Oxford's death, and (d) a match with the formula number of the Sonnets dedication cypher. All by accidental coincidence?

When we consider Oberon (Oxford) begging Queen Titania (Elizabeth) for the "little changeling boy" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the date 6/24 appears very significant indeed.

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Could it be that it was not coincidence, but was planned by Oxford? In that case we must consider suicide. And suicide has been considered on the basis of other evidence. In *The Oxfordian*, vol. 7 (2004), Christopher Paul and Robert Detobel, in separate meticulously researched articles ("A Monument Without a Tomb: The Mystery of Oxford's Death" and "To Be Or Not to Be: The Suicide Hypothesis") have examined abundant evidence showing that Oxford anticipated his death.

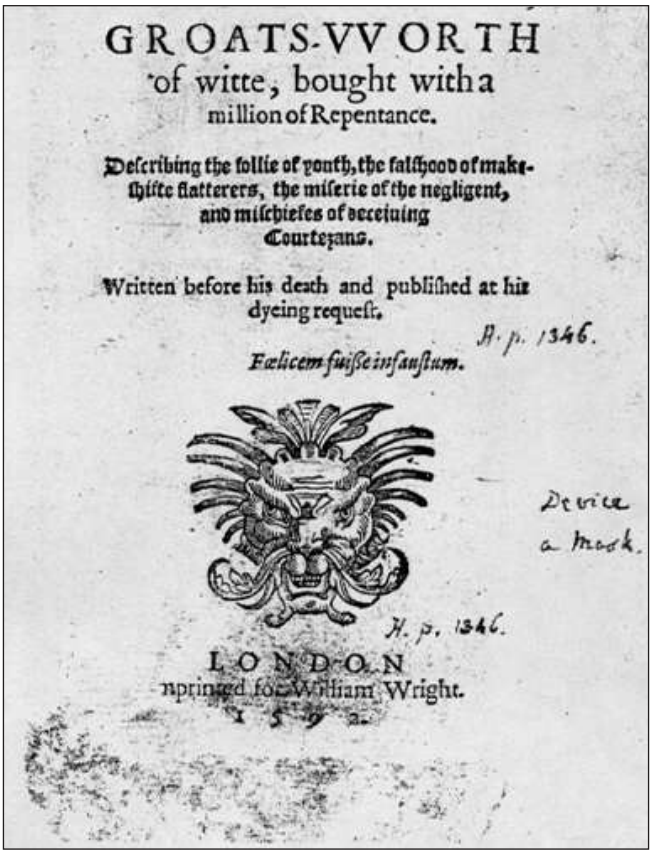
Oxford, who had been trained in the law, knew how to protect his heirs. By law, property belonging to someone who committed suicide was forfeited to the crown. Oxford was painfully aware of how the wardship of a minor could be exploited. He also knew that a last will and testament could subject an inheritance to outside claims. Oxford died without a will, avoiding the appointment of an executor.

(Continued on page 36)

Henry Chettle's Apology Revisited

by Robert Detobel

In Chapter 7 of *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*[1] ("Allusions to Shakespeare to 1642"), Stanley Wells writes: "What is usually taken to be the first printed reference to Shakespeare comes in a book named *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance* of 1592, written ostensibly by the popular playwright, poet and prose writer Robert Greene, but possibly in part or in whole by Henry Chettle.... Soon after the book appeared Chettle published *Kind Heart's Dream* with a preface in which he offered an apology for not having toned down the criticism made in the earlier book. He says that two men had been offended by the attack. He cares nothing for what one of them (usually supposed to be Christopher Marlowe) thinks, but regrets having offended the other, 'because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes. Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious [skilful] grace in writing that approves [demonstrates] his art.' The cryptic nature of the attack in the *Groatsworth of Wit* means that we cannot say definitively that it refers to Shakespeare."


GROATS-VVORTH
of witte, bought with a
million of Repentance.

Describing the follie of youth, the falshood of make-shifte flatterers, the miserie of the negligent, and mischieues of deceiuing Courtezans.

Written before his death and published at his dyeing request.

H. p. 1346.

Fœlicem fuisse infaustum.

Device a mark.

H. p. 1346.

LONDON
Imprinted for William Wright.
1592.

I will argue that Wells' rendition of Chettle's account is only approximately exact and neither the letter in *Groatsworth* nor Chettle's apology is as cryptic as many orthodox scholars have held. From Edmund K. Chambers, for instance, we have this assessment: "It is probable that the first play-maker here referred to is Marlowe and the second Shakespeare, although this implies some looseness in Chettle's language, since Greene's letter was obviously not written to Shakespeare. But there is nothing in the letter as we have it which could be offensive to any play-maker except Marlowe, who is spoken of as an atheist and Machiavellian, and Shakespeare, who is openly attacked. The others, presumably Peele and Nashe, 'young Iuvenall, that byting Satyrist'… are handled in a more friendly spirit."[2] Chambers' underlying argument is that Marlowe was obviously offended, but the two other playwrights Greene addressed could hardly feel offended. On the contrary, the invective against "Shake-scene" (Shakespeare) was offensive; therefore the intervention of the "divers of worship," maintaining, as Chettle relates, of whom the "divers of worship" "reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his Art" must have been Shakespeare, alias Shake-scene.

At first glance this might seem plausible. It follows Edmund Malone, who saw in the invective against Shake-scene, the "upstart crow," a charge of plagiarism, of "dishonesty, whereas there seems to be no such reproach in the words to the other playwright in the letter: 'And thou no lesse deserving than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour; driven (as my selfe) to extreme shifts, a litle have I to say to thee: and were it not an idolatrous oth, I would sweare by sweet S. George, thou art unworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay.'"

No reproach of "dishonesty" seems to be contained in these words. Whereas the invective against Shake-scene can be interpreted as implying dishonest behavior, namely stealing from others' works, nothing like that can be deduced from the address to the second playwright (actually, the third playwright, as he will be referred to here). Chettle, too, revokes a reproach by stating that his demeanor ("behavior") is civil.

In part C of this article I shall expound that the word "honest" used by the "divers of worship" is synonymous with the word "civil" used by Chettle; in the 16th and 17th centuries both terms denoted a quality of proper social behavior. Although "honesty" could have the modern sense of "without deceit," that was not its principal meaning. In part B I will show that the legal background of the early modern period leads to the conclusion that the third playwright in Chettle's account must have been an aristocrat, ruling out George Peele. Part A is a summary of the reasons why "Shake-scene" points to Edward Alleyn rather than

to Shakespeare. In part D I contend that the aristocratic third playwright was not only a playwright but, at least during a certain period, also a regular player. Finally, in part E I argue that the information we can draw from Chettle's apology is compatible with what John Davies of Hereford tells us about "Will. Shakespeare, our English Terence."

A. Shake-scene

The word "Shake-scene" can be understood as a pun on the name Shakespeare, but so can the name "Shakebag" in the play *Arden of Feversham*. The occurrence of the verb "shake" is not enough to pinpoint the allusion. It can also be understood as an aptronym, a name "that matches its owner's occupation or character," for instance, "Sir Midas Mammon" for a miser or usurer.[3] In that case it would allude to a famous player who could "shake a stage," as Edward Alleyn was considered by his contemporaries (Thomas Nashe twice refers to him in *Pierce Penniless* in 1592, Evrard Guilpin in *Skialetheia* in 1598). No one else in 1592 fits Chettle's characterization, "in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country," as well as Alleyn. Only a few documents of the time mention names of actors; an actor named Shakespeare is found nowhere. Of course, the letter in *Groatsworth* clearly paraphrases a line from Shakespeare: "A tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide." But that line is not only contained in 3 *Henry VI,* it is also found in *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (also known as *The second part of the Contention betwixt the Houses of Lancaster and York*), first published anonymously in 1595. It was published again in 1600, still anonymously.

It was not until 1619 that the play was attributed to William Shakespeare on the title page. Moreover, Edmund Malone and others have suspected that Christopher Marlowe had a hand in it. *The second part of the Contention betwixt the Houses of Lancaster and York* could have come from Marlowe, at least in part, in view of the substantial differences between it and Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI*. One phrase of which Marlowe seems to have been fond is "thickest throngs." It is not found in Shakespeare. It occurs once in the first and in the second part of *Contention*. It also occurs once in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine Part II* and *Dido, Queen of Carthage.* Edward Alleyn was also a businessman and along with his stepfather, Philip Henslowe, a moneylender. The term *Johannes fac totum* may be applied to him. Finally, the characterization of moneylenders as usurers may explain the phrase "I knowe the best husband of you all will never prove an Usurer, and the kindest of them all will never prove a kind nurse."

The phrase "supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you" turns the scales definitively in favor of Edward Alleyn. Alleyn is known to have "bombasted out," or filled up a play, with blank verse of his own. Among Alleyn's papers at Dulwich College is "a manuscript of the part of Orlando in Robert Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, probably played by Edward Alleyn.... It is written in the hand of some scribe, with corrections and insertions, some of which certainly, and probably all, are by Alleyn.... The play which was printed in quarto in 1594, appears to have originally belonged to the Queen's men, and probably passed to Lord Strange's company at the end of 1591. It was played by them at the Rose on 21 (22) Feb. 1591/2."[4]

So this play by Robert Greene, staged in February 1592, only months before *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* was written, had been "bombasted out" by Edward Alleyn; indeed, the actor had had the temerity to add some 530 lines of his own. Moreover, Alleyn was the owner of the play *Tamar Can* and likely to have been the author or at the very least a collaborator. Greg comments: "I have little doubt that it [*Tamar Can*] was written as a rival to *Tamburlain*

No one else in 1592 fits Chettle's characterization, "in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country," as well as Alleyn.... The phrase "supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you" turns the scales definitively in favor of Edward Alleyn. Alleyn is known to have "bombasted out," or filled up a play, with blank verse of his own. Among Alleyn's papers at Dulwich College is "a manuscript of the part of Orlando in Robert Greene's *Orlando Furioso.*" Thus, in the months leading up to the composition of *Groatsworth*, the famous actor Alleyn had manifestly dared to rival both Greene and Marlowe at playwriting.

which belonged to the Admiral's men."[5] Like Marlowe's *Tamburlain* the play consisted of two parts. Only the plot of the first part is extant. The second part was staged by the Lord Admiral's men on 28 April 1592. Thus, in the months leading up to the composition of *Groatsworth*, the famous actor Alleyn had manifestly dared to rival both Greene and Marlowe at playwriting.

B. "One or two of them"

It may look like hair-splitting, but Stanley Wells is inac-

(Continued on p. 16)

(Chettle's Apology, cont. from p. 15)

curate when he states that Chettle "says that two men had been offended by the attack." That is not what Chettle actually wrote: "About three moneths since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry Booke sellers hands, among other his Groatsworth of wit, in which a letter written to divers play-makers, is offensively by one or two of them taken...." In other words, Chettle is unable to state with certainty that a second playwright was personally offended. Clearly, one of them (in all likelihood Marlowe) had approached Chettle in person and required an apology from him. It is a small difference, but it is a crucial one. I do not accuse Stanley Wells of deliberate distortion. Probably most people would overlook the word "or" and attach no importance to it. I myself did not until the umpteenth reading of the apology. It seems to have escaped D. Allen Carroll, an expert on *Groatsworth of Wit*, in his extensive study in 1994.[6] But he draws the attention to it ten years later:

Naturally the Star Chamber assumed jurisdiction in all cases in which its rules on this matter had been infringed; and this led it to regard defamation as a crime. Borrowing perhaps from the Roman law as to *Libella Famosa*, it treated libels both upon officials and private persons as crimes. The former were seditious libels, and directly affected the security of the State; and the latter obviously led to breaches of the peace.

> Why 'one or two'? That Chettle intended to comment on 'two' of those alluded to in the attack must have been as clear to Chettle as it is to us, and if the 'two' were Marlowe and Peele, the scholar-playwrights to whom the letter was addressed, why not simply say 'two'? I am not sure. Certainly Marlowe and Peele were both gentleman scholars, but there was motive for saying 'one or two' if Shakespeare was the one praised. By blurring the social distinction and lumping together two playwrights — one a gentleman (Marlowe) and one not (the actor Shakespeare) — he can flatter Shakespeare, allowing the reader to suppose that Shakespeare was gentleman, elevating him in rank to compensate for the attack and perhaps to recognize Shakespeare's growing importance on the theatrical scene.[7]

This is the kind of wounded tale one encounters when trying to integrate the contents of a document with the traditional story of William Shaksper of Stratford. Carroll omits to consider some important aspects. If Chettle did not know whether the third playwright was actually offended, then the third playwright must not have personally approached him to require an apology. Nor had the "divers of worship" informed Chettle whether the third playwright was personally informed. The offense was an objective one, independent of what the third playwright might have personally felt.

Before turning to the solution — which is quite straightforward — attention should be drawn to another aspect which, as far as I know, is always neglected. While Chettle addresses a personal excuse to the first playwright, the apology contains no such excuse to the third playwright. "For the first, whose learning I reverence, and at the perusing of Greenes Booke, stroke out what then in conscience I thought he in some displeasure writ: or had it beene true, yet to publish it, was intollerable: him I would wish to use me no worse than I deserve." In vain do we search for a similar excuse to the third playwright. The explanation is that such an excuse did not matter, as becomes rapidly clear from an article by the eminent law historian William Holdsworth. It deals with the law of libel:[8]

> But, while the development of the tort of defamation was thus being warped by the action of the Common Law Courts, a wholly new conception of this offence was being developed in the Court of Star Chamber. The [Privy] Council and the Star Chamber had, in the interests of the peace and security of the State, assumed a strict control over the Press. Naturally the Star Chamber assumed jurisdiction in all cases in which its rules on this matter had been infringed; and this led it to regard defamation as a crime. Borrowing perhaps from the Roman law as to *Libella Famosa*, it treated libels both upon officials and private persons as crimes. The former were seditious libels, and directly affected the security of the State; and the latter obviously led to breaches of the peace.

From thence it follows that libels upon peers and other high-ranking persons were not dealt with the same way as those upon private persons; it also follows that libel of a peer or an officer of state and the ensuing restitution of honor was not the private affair of the one offended: it was an affair of state, touching the principles of social and political order:

> Unless the defamation was of a sort which came within the statutes which created the offence of scandalum magnatum, the mediaeval common law gave no remedy. For all other defamation the suitor was obliged to go to the Ecclesiastical Courts (p. 304).

Chettle's libel on Marlowe no longer fell under the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts; Marlowe would now have had to recur to the Court of Star Chamber. However, had Marlowe been a peer or a state official, the libel would not have been his private affair; the case would have, according to several statutes from the reign of Richard II to the reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth

I, been taken by the Privy Council (the Privy Council had jurisdictional powers).[9] Had it no longer been Marlowe's private affair but a case of sedition, of attack on the security of the state, there was no need for Chettle to address a personal apology to him, nor for Marlowe to personally request one from Chettle. But this was, of course, not the case for Marlowe. And had the third playwright been George Peele, Peele would have been in the same position as Marlowe and would have had to do what Marlowe did: require a personal apology. But if the third playwright was a man of high rank, the defamation or libel would be punishable under the statutes which created the offense of scandalum magnatum. Regardless of whether the third playwright was personally offended or not, the libel was not his private affair, it was an affair of state and Chettle could not know if he was personally offended. The "divers of worship" would not have told Chettle whether he was personally offended, they would have told him that he had violated the statutes and ought publicly to recant. We may conclude that the "divers of worship" were members of the Privy Council.[10]

C. Honesty and Civility

As said, Chettle revokes by saying that the third playwright's demeanor (behavior) was civil. The "divers of worship" refute an unidentified reproach by affirming that the third playwright's "uprightness of dealing argues his honesty."

The terms "honest/honesty" covered a very broad semantic field. Cotgrave's French-English dictionary (1611) lists the following meanings for the French adjective honneste: honest, good, vertuous; just, upright, sincere; gentle, civill, courteous, worthy, noble, honorable, of good reputation, comelic[y], seemelic[y], handsome, wellbefitting. But the word "honesty" had not only the modern narrow meaning of "sincere." It covered a broad semantic field. It was not uniquely applicable to aristocrats. Of Aulus Persius Flaccus, Francis Meres writes in the "Comparative Discourse" within *Palladis Tamia* that he was of "an honest life and upright conversation"; "conversation" here does not mean "colloquy," but general behavior. Of Michael Drayton, whom Meres compares to Aulus Persius Flaccus, it is said that he is of "honest conversation and well-governed carriage." Though not uniquely applicable to an aristocrat, it was in the first place intended for an aristocrat, "a governor" as Sir Thomas Elyot calls him in *The Boke named the Governor* (1531), an educational handbook for the new aristocrat elite. Elyot applies the word "honest" to manners in general, learning, dancing, music, and any form of recreation. But, according to Elyot, the behavior of the emperor Nero was not "honest" because he played the whole day before the general public. Roger Ascham wrote another educational guide for the aristocratic youth, *The Schoolmaster* (1570). Ascham, too, uses the words "honesty" and its derivatives in various contexts: singing, dancing, learning, manners in general. Ascham exhorts the aristocracy to set the example. "Take heed therefore, you great ones in Court, take heed what you do, take heed how you live. For as you great ones use to do, so all mean men love to do. You be indeed makers or marrers of all men's manners in the Realm."[11] Ascham, like Elyot, assigns to the aristocracy the role of being the living model of honesty as a basic legitimation to govern society. Shakespeare has Henry V echo Ascham: "Dear Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak list of country's fashion; we are the makers of a manners" (V.ii.287). If there was such a reproach in the address, it was not so "friendly" as Chambers would have it (see above), for it was to deny an aristocrat the capacity of being a "governor," a political leader.

But if this aristocratic playwright had also been playing on the public stage, he had violated the aristocratic code of behavior. Within the aristocracy he would at least for a time become an "outcast." To appear on the stage other than in private or at Court was not suitable, proper, "honest" or "civil" behavior, and our third playwright is likely to have been condemned by his peers ("disgraced in their eyes") and banished from court ("in disgrace with Fortune" [sonnet 29]). It was probably what was meant by "thou art unworthy better hap, since thou depend on so mean a stay."

Whatever the status of the third playwright within his own class, a commoner like Chettle could not meddle with affairs which were considered the province of the aristocracy. Chettle's words might have alluded to it: "The other, whome at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that as I have moderated the heate of living writers, and might have usde my owne discretion (especially in such a case) the Author beeing dead…."

Does the "special case" refer to the author being dead, or does Chettle mean that, especially in the case of an author belonging to the aristocracy, he should have used his own discretion? At any rate Chettle clearly understood that the words to the third playwright contained a serious reprehension. In asserting the third playwright's "civil demeanor" he says the same as the divers of worship affirms his "honesty" for, see Cotgrave, "honest," "civil," "upright," "gentle," "comely" (gracious), were to some degree interchangeable, which is confirmed by Stefano Guazzo, whose book *La Civil Conversazione*, published in 1574 and soon to be translated into English, seems to have heralded the increasing use of "civil" for "honest": "You see then that we give a

(Continued on p. 18)

(Chettle's Apology, cont. from p. 17)

large sense and signification to this word for that we would have understood, that to live civilly, is not said in respect to the City, but of the quality of the mind. To be short, my meaning is, that civil conversation is an honest, commendable, and virtuous kind of living in the world."[12]

D. The aristocratic playwright was a player

Indeed, Chettle tells us that this playwright was also an actor. He writes that he is sorry "because my selfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill, than he exelent in the qualitie he professes." In Elizabethan and Stuart times the phrase "quality he professes" denotes the profession of player. Thomas Heywood, himself a playwright and actor, uses the term "quality they profess" (to describe an actor's profession) several times in his *Apology for Actors,* published in 1611.[13] The term is also regularly used in official documents.

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E. Will. Shake-speare, "our English Terence"

The profile of the third playwright developed here is compatible with Shakespeare. So far we concur with Don C. Allen. We do not concur with the identity Allen had in mind. The profile of the third playwright I have presented here is compatible with "Will. Shake-speare." as presented by John Davies of Hereford. Davies says about Shakespeare that had he not played kingly roles, he would have been a companion for a king, i.e., a courtier. Even if William Shaksper of Stratford had not been an actor, he could not have been a companion for a king, for he was a petty trader, and it was socially impossible for such a person to be a courtier. And that Shakespeare "sowed honesty," as Davies pretends, is, in fact, a reaffirmation of what the "divers of worship" told Henry Chettle. "Honesty," properly understood as a term covering a wide field of meaning; in the case of this epigram I would pick from Cotgrave's enumeration: comely, seemely, well-befitting.

Endnotes

1 Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells, (ed.), *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 73-87.

2 Chambers, E.K., *William Shakespeare – A Study of Facts and problems*, 2 vol., Cambridge, 1930, vol. I, pp. 8-59.

3 *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*, ed. Tom McArthur, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

4 *Henslowe Papers*, ed. Walter W. Greg, London: Bullen, 1907, Appendix III, p. 155.

5 *Ibid.*, Appendix II, p. 144.

6 Carroll, D. Allen (ed.), *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*, Binghamton, New York, 1994.

7 D. Allen Carroll, "Reading the 1592 *Groatsworth* Attack on Shakespeare," in *Tennessee Law Review*, Volume 72, Fall 2004, Number 1, p. 293.

8 "Defamation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" in *Law Quarterly Review*, No. CLIX, July 1924, p. 305.

9 The first statute to be enacted on s*candalum magnatum* was the Statute 3ºEdward I. (1275) c.34: "Forasmuch as there have been oftentimes found in the Country Devisors of Tales, whereby discord or occasion of discord, hath many times arisen between the King and the People, or Great Men of this Realm... It is commanded, That from henceforth none be so hardy to tell or publish any false News or Tales, whereby discord, or occasion of discord or slander may grow between the King and his People, or the Great Men of the Realm." The chapter was re-enacted in 2º Richard II. (1378) as chapter 5. The "Great Men of the Realm," the class of "magnates" was more detailedly specified: "Prelates, Dukes, Earls, Barons, and other Nobles and Great Men of the Realm, and also of the Chancellor, Treasurer, Clerk of the Privy Seal, Steward of the King's House, Justices of the one Bench or the other, and of other Great Officers of the Realm." The chapter was again re-enacted as chapter 11 of 12º Richard II. (1388). A significant addition was made to the last phrase of the previous statute, "to be punished by the Advice of the Council, notwithstanding the said Statutes." "Notwithstanding the said Statutes," those of 1275 and 1378, means that the common law courts were no longer the sole venues for cases of slander of "Great Men."

10 Chettle's case in 1592 is comparable to that of Gabriel Harvey and his libel on Oxford and, mistakenly, on Sir James Croft, Controller of the Royal Household. In his *Four Letters* (1592) Harvey writes: "and the sharpest parte of those unlucky Letters had bene over-read at the Councell Table [Privy Council]; I was advised by certaine honourable and divers worshipfull persons, to interpreate my intention in more expresse terms..." (Gabriel Harvey, *Works*, 3 vol., ed. by A.B. Grosart, 1884, vol. I, p. 180). It is likely that the "divers worshipful persons" were the same as the "honourable favourers" who "pacified" Sir James Croft on Harvey's behalf, namely M. Secretary Wilson, second Secretary of State, and Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer, both members of the Privy Council (*ibid*., 182).

11 Rogar Ascham, *The Scholemaster,* London, 1570, p. 22-

12 Ibid., p. 35.

13 Heywood, Thomas, *An Apology for Actors*, New York: Garland Publ., 1973. "And this is the action behoovefull in any that professe this quality." (p. 29). "... the King of Denmarke... entertained into his service a company of English actors... the Duke of Brunswicke and the Landgrave of Hessen retaine in their courts certaine of ours of the same quality." (p. 40). "I hope there is no man of so unsensible a spirit, that can inveigh against the true and direct use of this quality." (p. 50)

(Shakespeare Beyond Doubt, cont. from p. 1)

contributed, including such familiar names as Alan Nelson, David Kathman and James Shapiro. *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* contains twelve chapters and four appendices, representing the contributions of thirteen different writers, including Shakespeare Fellowship president Tom Regnier and trustees Bonner Miller Cutting and Earl Showerman.

It is, of course, no surprise that the two books reach opposite conclusions about the true identity of William Shakespeare. While *Shakspeare Beyond Doubt* purports (according to its press releases, anyway) to examine the authorship issue objectively, it comes to the predetermined conclusion that there can be no doubt that Will Shaksper of Stratford-on-Avon and the writer William Shakespeare are indeed one and the same. The same old arguments are reiterated; no new scholarship is presented.

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Shakespeare Beyond Doubt? does not advocate for a particular alternative candidate (indeed, it barely mentions the names of any), but instead is intended specifically to establish the existence of doubt about the Stratford man's candidacy by showing the many weaknesses of the traditional case. Readers who are knowledgeable about the issue will be familiar with most of the arguments, but will also find some new examples of scholarship. For example, Alexander Waugh's chapter, "Keeping Shakespeare Out of Italy," not only shows that the true Shakespeare had to have visited Italy, but also details the blunders that traditional scholars made, and which their academic successors continue to rely on, in trying to maintain that he didn't. Similarly, one of the appendices, "Social Network Theory and Shakespeare," by the late Donald P. Hayes of Cornell University, employs new statistical methods to show that it is extremely unlikely that Shaksper was Shakespeare, based on the paucity of references to him made by his literary contemporaries.

One reason that Shahan and Waugh chose to title their book *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* was that they hoped it would lead to press coverage of it side-by-side with the Edmondson-Wells book. That strategy seems to be bearing fruit. Both books were discussed together on CBC national radio in Canada in early July. On July 4 the *Daily Mail* and the *Guardian* both ran interviews with Waugh and Wells. When asked by the *Daily Mail* about the similarity of titles, Waugh said, "I did this to provoke Wells. I lay out a challenge for him to debate the whole question on television." Wells took the academic high road, telling the *Daily Mail* that "We are published by the Cambridge University Press, one of the leading academic publishers. His is clearly a vanity publication." The *Guardian* featured longer interviews. Waugh stated that "The academics are cornered. They have no evidence at all. Our Declaration of Reasonable Doubt has forced their hand. They have been idle, and swept other theories under the carpet, dismissing us as fragmented lunatics." Referring to his own chapter in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*, Waugh boasted that he "destroy[s] the argument that [Shakespeare] did not go to Italy." Wells was obviously upset by the subtitle of the competing book ("Exposing

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(Continued on p. 36)

Snatches from History

A Play in Five Acts

by Margaret Becker

[**Editor's note:** We were surprised and delighted to hear from Margaret Becker, who is a direct descendant of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. She is a Pennsylvania resident; her branch of the family, which is descended via Elizabeth Vere and William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, and via James Stanley, 7th Earl of Derby and Charlotte de la Tremoille, came to America before the Revolution. Ms. Becker studied nursing and has a written a six-volume work on the history of schools. She became interested in the Shakespeare Authorship Question many years ago after reading Mark Twain's *Is Shakespeare Dead?*

Ms. Becker gathered the material for her play "casually over time from Oxfordian web sites. The fascinating thing about all this research and discussion is that it is about my ancestors, who are the de Veres, Cecils, Stanleys, Goldings, Trussells, Francis Bacon and some of the Tudors, etc." She makes no claim that *Snatches from History* depicts what actually happened four centuries ago, but promises that it "should be at least as realistic as a Shakespearean biography." As she puts it, "Since there is so much fiction about Will Shaksper it is only fair to have some about the Earl also. Wouldn't we all like to overhear conversations from the past? So here it is, anachronisms and all." Because of its length, we are running *Snatches from History* in the Summer and Fall issues of *Shakespeare Matters.*]

The play is set in the time-span from 1590, from Edward de Vere's second marriage, to 1623 and the completion of the First Folio. It is given in five acts with numerous scenes. Although the Earl of Oxford used many pen names, the Shakespeare name might have been accidental, an inadvertent adoption of the name.

Scene changing: With scenes at different locations rearrange rooms and furniture with different positions of windows and fireplaces; scene changes could have the things on the desk rearranged and chairs moved and adding different chairs. The short play could also be presented without windows and fireplace only using the desk and chairs. Other changed scenes can have changing light patterns through the windows representing morning, late afternoon even early evening, etc.

Cast of Characters

Lordship	Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford
ffrancis Trentham	Brother of Elizabeth Trentham, Lady Oxford
Countess of Oxford	Wife of Edward de Vere and sister of ffrancis
Gentleman or Will	William Shaksper of Stratford-on-Avon
John Shaksper	Father of William, glove maker
Secretary	Actor, poet, Lord Oxford's secretary
Lord Southampton	Henry Wriothesley
Richard Field	Printer known by Will
Ralph Huband	Person at the Stratford Church
Richard Burbage	Actor with Lord Chamberlin's Men
John Heminges	Actor with Lord Chamberlin's Men
Henry Condell	Actor with Lord Chamberlin's Men
Ben Jonson	Playwright and author
Printer	Printer, who will print quartos
Mr. Fletcher	Theatre manager and playwright
Mr. Tharp	Printer
Mr. Jaggard	Printer
Susan de Vere	Countess Montgomery, youngest daughter of 17th Earl of Oxford
Philip Herbert	Earl of Montgomery, Susan's husband
William Herbert	Earl of Pembroke, brother of Philip, Earl of Montgomery
Robert Armin	Actor with Lord Chamberlain's Men
Assistant	Assistant to secretary
Bishop	Bishop of St. Paul's Cathedral
Mr. Bleake	Employee of Lord Oxford
Bridget de Vere	Second daughter of Lord Oxford
Countess of Derby	Elizabeth de Vere, oldest daughter of Lord Oxford
Earl of Derby	Husband of Elizabeth de Vere
Mr. Harvey	Publisher *of Pierce's Superogation*
Henry de Vere	18th Earl of Oxford, 11years old
Nicholas Hill	Secretary of Lord Oxford
John Lowin	Actor with Lord Chamberlin's Men
Retainer	Employee of Lord Southampton
Mrs. Jones	Employee of Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford

ACT ONE

Scene 1 *(London, Lordship's house, 1591, day)*

At rise: *De Vere's library/studio is furnished with a stretcher or tavern type table and carved wooden armchairs; some chests along the wall and de Vere portraits; several windows with open drapery and an equipped fireplace. The table or desk has candles and candlesticks and snuffer on it along with a stack of large sheets of paper (the size of a folded newspaper), several rolls of manuscripts, inkwells and quill pens and penknife, also several stacks of books. The scene opens with ffrancis Trentham and Lord Oxford.*

FFRANCIS TRENTHAM: Elizabeth, Lady Oxford, tells me that you could use some help with the management of affairs.
LORDSHIP: I certainly need all the help I can get since there is a huge indebtedness and fine owing to the Crown and Court of Wards to make up or at least improve upon.
TRENTHAM: I can take care of the properties and so on.
LORDSHIP: Yes, I wish you would do that. I suppose I could sell some plays to bring in more income and also put on public performances at the Blackfriars. It is the main thing where I've had experience and am pretty good at, but one must avoid offending the powers that be. One in the nobility cannot be a merchant of plays.
TRENTHAM: If you could sell plays or rent them, that would be added revenue.
LORDSHIP: I could get someone to act as a go-between to sell them that could create demand for the plays.
TRENTHAM: If you can get someone working for the player's troupes that you can rely on, that will save on having to pay anyone on your own staff. You won't need to keep as many or any secretaries.
LORDSHIP: I wouldn't want Lord Burleigh or Sir Robert Cecil to know I was producing plays or making money on them.
TRENTHAM: Lord Burleigh would definitely object and might get the theatres shut down. The city of London could close down the theatres on their own or at the behest of Lord Burleigh as they were a few years ago.
LORDSHIP: Also they could give more fines, being puritanical you know. You can be punished with imprisonment or capital punishment. It has happened to some already.
TRENTHAM: Don't forget you should have a portion of the entrance receipts, and maybe if you stay out of sight, and do not circulate so much at court, then not so many people will be asking you for money. If you become involved with the production, that would give you more income also.
LORDSHIP: I will be busy enough writing plays anyway, and I am getting too lame to get around very well.
TRENTHAM: It might be advisable to use a "nom de plume" and disguise your association with the plays, for if you don't put your name on anything that is published no one will ever know you wrote it; who would know otherwise; how could they? It isn't hard to keep a secret; only you and your secretary and the Countess will know anything; I don't count.
LORDSHIP: I have actually always done that in one way or another to a great extent; I have no intention of tempting fate. I think I should go see my cousin. He might be a good one to act as go-between. He is up at Stratford-on-Avon.
(Later- next day in library/study)
COUNTESS OF OXFORD: Have you decided if you were going up to Billesley Manor yet?
LORDSHIP: Yes, send someone around to the livery and ask them to shoe the four largest horses, the bays and the black stallion. I will be making up a party of four and we'll be going up to Stratford; it will take us a fortnight until we return. To bed early and up when the cock crows.

Scene 2 *(1591; Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford goes to Stratford-on-Avon to see Will Shaksper and his father, John Shaksper. They are kinsmen through the Trussell family. Edward de Vere's grandmother was Elizabeth Trussell [mother of the sixteenth earl] and Will Shaksper was a cousin of John Trussell. At the Shaksper wool shop; late morning)*
LORDSHIP: Since I was up here to look things over I couldn't miss you.
JOHN SHAKSPER: It's about time. I was wondering when you would be coming up.
LORDSHIP: I have to go on up and work on the sale of Bilton Hall up there. I believe John Shuckborough had said that he would be interested in buying it, also the Blue Boar Inn. I suppose the people who lease it might be buying it, and I will also be selling

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LORDSHIP: Also they could give more fines, being puritanical you know. You can be punished with imprisonment or capital punishment. It has happened to some already.

TRENTHAM: Don't forget you should have a portion of the entrance receipts, and maybe if you stay out of sight, and do not circulate so much at court, then not so many people will be asking you for money. If you become involved with the production, that would give you more income also.

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the Forest of Arden.
SHAKSPER: That's too bad, but maybe you can still come up here and visit us and the Trussells.
LORDSHIP: I am going to order some of your gloves, since they are the best ones I can find. I will take six pairs; make them in kidskin, doeskin, which you can embroider on the cuff, and buckskin. They work out very well for horseback riding.
SHAKSPER: I can also get boar hide and I should be getting a few rabbits. It seems just like yesterday since you explained to me how to make the first ones; it must be fifteen years ago now since you came back from Italy.
LORDSHIP: That sounds interesting; let me have the boar hide also.
SHAKSPER: You will like them; they are quite comfortable; the rabbit ones are good for winter, too.
LORDSHIP: I thought someone at home should know how to make

(Continued on p. 22)

(Snatches from History, cont. from p. 21)

the Italian ones. So I got the glovemaker I bought the gloves from to tell me how he did it. I got as much detail as I could on it. I thought of you since you were a butcher and had hides. Fortunately, they were in baggage that was missed by the Dutch pirates when I was returning from the trip on the Continent.
SHAKSPER: I still have the pair you gave me for a pattern. They have turned out very well, I must say. The Italian ones are different with the embroidery on the leather.
LORDSHIP: They are much like the ones I gave Queen Elizabeth. Since Lady Oxford died several years ago, I got married again.
SHAKSPER: I don't suppose you knew that Will got married.
LORDSHIP: Yes, I remember that from the last time I was up here.
SHAKPER: They, the gloves will be done in about six weeks. I'll send them down to London with Will, since he will also be taking a large bundle of them. I send him down there about every six months. Sometimes I get help and make even more.
LORDSHIP: When will Cousin Will be around?
SHAKSPER: You could probably see him this afternoon. He's busy with business right now or maybe he has gone hunting.
LORDSHIP: I'll be back to talk to Will.

Scene 3 (*Afternoon at the wool shop; Lordship enters, Will is there)*
LORDSHIP: Hello, Will, how long has it been now since you got married?
WILL: Have three little ones. Father said you wanted to talk to me.
LORDSHIP: Yes, when you go down to London with the gloves, go around to The Theatre or the Rose; that's a new auditorium, and get a job with "Lord Pembroke's Men" or "The Admiral's Men." They could use somebody.
WILL: As soon as I get there I'll go around to see them.
LORDSHIP: If you get a job with them, I have some plays to sell or maybe rent. We used them at Court and at the Blackfriars Playhouse with the "Oxford Boys." I should have about ten or twelve on hand, and I'm writing more. Once I wrote one up here at Billesley Manor when the Trussells still had it; my grandmother owned the manor at one time, you know. The play was *As You Like It,* about the Forest of Arden.
WILL: I don't think I ever saw any of your plays.
LORDSHIP: I thought since I got married again and needed to make some money I would get down to brass tacks and write two or three a year. Since you're good at business, you can rent them or sell them to the "Lord Pembroke's Men," and to the other acting troupes, too; that way no one knows I'm making money on them. I will alternate the plays, a history, then a tragedy, with a comedy between each one.
WILL: You aren't still at Fisher's Folly, are you?
LORDSHIP: No, I sold that some time ago. Look for me at Stoke-Newington; it's a little way out of the city. We are still looking for another place.

Scene 3 *(One afternoon on a street in London, 1592)*
MR. HARVEY: Why hello, good afternoon, Nicholas Hill. I never thought I'd run into you. How are you lately and the Earl of Oxford?
MR. HILL: His Lordship has been working on a very long poem, but he hasn't finished it – it's to be named *Venus and Adonis*.
MR HARVEY: I'll just make a note of that. People are interested you know, probably should publish the information in *Pierce's Superogation*.

Scene 5 *(Lord Oxford's studio, 1592)*
SECRETARY: I finished making a fair copy of those poems, the *Venus and Adonis* and so on. His Lordship said to copy them and sign them and send them to Lord Southampton, but I'm not going to sign them. Do you want to?
ASSISTANT: I think not! There is a gentleman waiting in the other room asking about plays.
SECRETARY: Tell him, one should be ready in a week or two. Wait! Send him in. I'll talk to him.

(at the doorway says to person in other room:)
ASSISTANT: Come right in.

(Will Shaksper enters)
ASSISTANT: This is the gentleman has been waiting.
WILL: I just got a job with the new Lord Chamberlain's Men and am looking for new plays.
SECRETARY: What is your name?
WILL: Will.
SECRETARY: I was wondering if you were busy?
WILL: Not for the time being.
SECRETARY: I was wondering, if you had time, if you might run an errand to Lord Southampton; all our servants are busy with plays.
WILL: Where is he?
SECRETARY: You have to go out to Sussex, Midhurst. You will be paid for the trip.
WILL: I will be glad to do it.
SECRETARY: I need you to sign your name here on the dedication page.
WILL: You had better do it, I'm not for writing.
SECRETARY: I'll write it.

WILL: Write, "Will Shaksper." Would you believe that once the last name was actually Jaques Pierre?
(*Secretary writes the name "William Shake – speare")*

Scene 6 (*A day later at Southampton's, at the door of the mansion)*
RETAINER: Yes?
WILL: Wish to see his lordship, the Earl of Southampton.
RETAINER: And you are?
WILL: Will.
RETAINER: Just wait, his lordship will see you.
(Will goes in with him to Southampton's drawing room.)

RETAINER: Your lordship, this is Will.
WILL: I brought these poems for you from Lord Oxford's secretary, says they're from Lord Oxford.

(His lordship looks over the poems)
SOUTHAMPTON: They are really nice. I am giving you this patronage. *(He gives him a large bag of money)* They are really good; I think they should be printed.

ACT TWO

Scene 1 *(at Lord Oxford's studio, 1593; Will enters)*

LORDSHIP: Hello, Will, what's up?

WILL: Did you know Christopher Marlowe?

LORDSHIP: What do you mean, "did I"?

WILL: They say that last week he was stabbed in a tavern; killed him. I believe they said at Deptford.

LORDSHIP: Yes, I knew Kit Marlowe very well. He was a colleague with us at Fisher's Folly. I worked with him a bit on *Tamburlaine the Great* and assisted with other plays. He was a fine dramatist; that is too bad.

WILL: No one is safe.

LORDSHIP: I found out information for Sir Francis Walsingham and the Queen by going to the Catholic Church. I paid for that with the slander of my character and reputation, but I did turn in the plotters who were going to kill the Queen.

WILL: Then it was necessary.

LORDSHIP: The Countess of Oxford delivered Henry de Vere, Viscount Bulbeck, Lord of Sanford and Badlesmere on Saturday the 24th of February.

WILL: Well, I guess congratulations are certainly in order.

LORDSHIP: He is to be christened in seven weeks, on Easter, April 15th.

WILL: Yes, that is very good news.

LORDSHIP: And changing the subject, you know, Will, there is one thing you must do while you are here in London if you haven't already done it, and that is go to Mr. Digges' house and have him show you his perspective glass he invented. Tell him I sent you and have him show you and then look through it after dark at the sky. Thomas Digges dedicated his book to Lord Burleigh; he was his patron, you know. It's been about twenty years ago, at about the time I was studying astronomy with John Dee. Some of these ideas I used in the play of *Hamlet* that I wrote a few years ago.

(*Lord Oxford's, same scene - Later – next day - Will enters)*

WILL : I went to see Mr. Digges' perspective glass. I think he is the smartest man I ever met.

LORDSHIP: He is indeed very interesting, that is for sure. You know it wouldn't hurt to have *Venus and Adonis* printed, and *Lucrece* could be printed also. They can just go as they are. I have them here.

WILL: Is that it? *(picks up the rolled manuscripts and walks to the door)*

LORDSHIP: And changing the subject, you know, Will, there is one thing you must do while you are here in London if you haven't already done it, and that is go to Mr. Digges' house and have him show you his perspective glass he invented. Tell him I sent you and have him show you and then look through it after dark at the sky. Thomas Digges dedicated his book to Lord Burleigh; he was his patron, you know. It's been about twenty years ago, at about the time I was studying astronomy with John Dee. Some of these ideas I used in the play of *Hamlet* that I wrote a few years ago.

LORDSHIP: Wait! Take this leather pouch with you and have it filled with galls of oak. You know those little round balls for making ink. I'm going to have some ink made, or maybe I'll make it myself. The gall ink is the only good black ink there is.

(*Later; Countess enters)*

LORDSHIP: When Mrs. Jones has time I could use some more candles in here.

COUNTESS OF OXFORD: Yes, I meant to remind her to bring a basket of them in.

Scene 2 (*Lord Oxford's studio, London, two years later, about 1595)*

LORD SHIP: Well, how is everything going?

WILL: I should say it is going very well; everybody wants to rent the plays. Probably could use some more dedication pages. I got a job with the Lord Chamberlin's Men and was in a couple of plays that we did for the Queen. I also bought a share of the theatre.

LORDSHIP: Did you hear that Thomas Digges died day before yesterday?

WILL: Yes, I was going to say I heard about it yesterday. He was such a wonderful man.

LORDSHIP: It seems such a shame for a person like that to die. Life can be much too short. A person doesn't notice time moving with day and night or with winter and summer, but when someone you know well dies then it is very noticeable that time is passing. It seems like we are losing all our friends,

WILL: I'm glad I got to see through his perspective glass when I did.

LORDSHIP: I've been working on a new play. It's going to be for my daughter, her Ladyship Elizabeth's wedding, which I have to finish up so the players can work on it, and it will be called *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Next month they are having their wedding at Greenwich Place with the whole court in attendance; she will be married to William Stanley, Lord Derby. They'll live at Westminster when they're not at Lathom House in Lancashire.

WILL: Did you know the Lord Chamberlain's Men are going to go up to Cambridge and Oxford to perform?

LORDSHIP: Are you going to be going up there with them? Oh! I remember in my youth when I went up there for a five-month term and had to review my studies with my tutor Bartholomew Clerke, because I had to take the oral exams in Latin and some Greek, too, to pass the tutorials at Queen's College and at St. John's College. Sir Thomas Smith taught me Latin and Greek and when I was older I studied classical literature. And maybe a decade ago there was a lecture at Oxford, given by Giordano Bruno on philosophy and science. It was on the infinite universe and heliocentric astronomy. It was fascinating. I put it into *Hamlet*.

WILL: Well, they gave me the part of the

(Continued on p. 24)

(Snatches from History, cont. from p. 23)

ghost so I guess I'll go.

Scene 3 (*Study/Library, Oxford's House; the Countess and Lordship, mid- morning, 1597)*

LORDSHIP: I'll need someone to get the gelding for the coach because I will be driving it. I have an appointment with Mr. Ketel at his studio this afternoon for another sitting.

COUNTESS OF OXFORD: I will ask Bleake to have it ready after our noon dinner.

(Study/Library another day, mid-morning)

LORDSHIP: Tuesday when I sat for Mr. Ketel at his painter's studio it was becoming too cloudy to see well so the session was cut short. Now, since today is looking very nice I expect him to come with the painting this afternoon. We will have to remove the curtains and draperies from one or two of the windows so he can see to do the finish and touch-up.

COUNTESS: As soon as she has time; I will be helping the downstairs maid to do that.

Scene 4 *(at King's Place a number of years later, about 1598; Will and assistant)*

WILL: I came to see if you have a play ready.

ASSISTANT: Why, yes we do. It will be at our last rate.

WILL: Could you write Will Shakespeare on it for me so I can get patrons? I need to get some money to pay the players. Maybe I could see Lord Hunsdon.

(assistant signs William Shake-speare on them; Lordship enters)

LORDSHIP: Hello, Will; were you able to get *The Merchant of Venice*?

WILL: Yes; it was pretty cheap. They were done with it. James Roberts already took it to the Stationers' Register Office and it's been licensed. He said they just put "Lord Chamberlain" on the registry. He is already setting type.

LORDSHIP: That's good. It will save me from having to make another copy. You won't believe it! When I finally got back from the Crown the historical Earls of Oxford's ancestral home at Hedingham, I went to see it and all the curtain walls and other buildings had been removed. And when I went to see the Earls Colne Priory you wouldn't believe it -

(Will interrupts)

WILL: Talk about buildings being torn down, you know the old Theatre, well they, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, tore it down and moved it to the South Bank.

LORDSHIP: You mean on the Thames?

WILL: Yes, they had it in storage and then put it up overnight. They're calling it "The Globe." It holds three thousand people.

LORDSHIP: So what was the idea?

WILL: All the theatres are going to build over there, now that the London authorities banned them from within the city limits. They are going to lease land to build it on from Nicholas Bleake. After I heard about it, I asked them and they are going to let me buy a share in it. That thing is really going to make money. You were saying about Earls Colne?

LORDSHIP: When I went to see the Earls Colne Priory my father had gotten back. You wouldn't believe it; the Earl of Oxford's mausoleum had been demolished, ruined and razed to the ground. No sign that it ever existed; I couldn't believe it.

WILL: I wonder why that is? I never heard of such a thing!

LORDSHIP: It had been taken away by a vicious depraved scoundrel and the tomb effigies were stolen along with the rest that my father had put in. The bones of my ancestors were just dumped there and scattered around. I had to have them interred in the village chapel's graveyard. It was shocking, awful! Revolting!

WILL: That's terrible, that's horrible! Disgusting! There should be a way to prevent that.

LORDSHIP: Yes, a curse!

Scene 5 (*King's Place, later, 1598)*

LORDSHIP: It wouldn't hurt to have *Loves Labours Lost* printed. I suppose we should look around for a printer. Now that Lord Burleigh has gone to the Great Beyond things are a little easier; we have more leeway to put on performances and print plays.

WILL: I could take it to Richard Field, he is a printer and he is somewhere here in London; I know him from up at Stratford.

LORDSHIP: Yes. I wish you would do that. I know Richard; he used to have a shop near the Blackfriars. Look there first; he might still be there. In the past I've bought many a book from him, and while you're there pick up a couple of reams of foolscap paper or stop in at the stationers. A gross of nibs or quills wouldn't hurt either. I've been picking up some quills in the Goose Meadow, but I need more.

Scene 6 *(Richard Field's print shop, later, 1598; Will enters,)*

RICHARD FIELD: Don't I know you from some place? *(beat)* Why! Will Shaksper! What are you doing here in London? It is certainly a surprise to see you down here in the city.

WILL: I just came in to see if you could give me a price on printing this play?

FIELD: Is there a name that should go

LORDSHIP: It wouldn't hurt to have *Loves Labours Lost* printed. I suppose we should look around for a printer. Now that Lord Burleigh has gone to the Great Beyond things are a little easier; we have more leeway to put on performances and print plays.

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on this?
WILL: It's for the Earl of Oxford, but not to use his name.
FIELD: You know the Earl of Oxford?
WILL: Yes, he's my cousin.
FIELD: I see; yes, I agree; the Earl is famous and doesn't need any publicity for anything else.
(Later in the print shop, to the printer's devil)
FIELD: I know Will Shaksper from up at Stratford; put William Shake-speare on it.

Scene 7 *(at Lord Oxford's studio)*
LORDSHIP: You said you were looking for a better place to move to; did you ever find what you were looking for?
WILL: Yes, I'm going to move over there on Silver Street to Mr. Mountjoy's house while he has an opening. I hear that Mrs. Mountjoy is a very good cook. It's near where Mr. Digges used to live.

Scene 8 *(Lord Oxford's studio, 1599; Will enters*)
WILL: You know they are out there burning a whole bunch of books. They said it was the Archbishop and the other Bishops doing it. They're taking them out of the bookstalls and everything. Some people can't print any more books, either.
LORDSHIP: It's the Puritans. It just goes to show how much influence they are gaining on everything.

ACT THREE
Scene 1 *(Lord Oxford's studio, afternoon, 1599; the Countess enters)*
COUNTESS: The girls are here. Bridget and Susan have brought news.
LORDSHIP: Show them in.

(Countess goes out and returns with girls; Bridget is 15 years old, Susan is 12) (staggered / mixed speech)
BRIDGET/SUSAN: Hello father, we came to tell you first that - Bridget is going to be married to Francis Norris in April.
LORDSHIP: Well, I'm glad to hear that; that's fine. Susan, where do you want to live, because Bridget is going to be married now? I know you are used to living with the Countess of Bedford, Bridget Russell, but she is not well.
SUSAN: Uncle Robert's secretary said that I should go and live with them.
LORDSHIP: All right, if that is what you want to do.
SUSAN: Father, tell me about Grandmother. Lizbeth was telling us that she was very strict.
LORDSHIP: You mean my mother or Ann's mother?
SUSAN: Ann's mother.
LORDSHIP: I thought that's who you meant. You know I once called Philip Sidney a puppy and by the same token or along that same vein I could have called her a kitten, except that she was too mature for a kitten.
BRIDGET: Father! No-o! You are saying she was a cat!
LORDSHIP: It seems to me I know some other people like that, and I didn't say she was another species.
BRIDGET: Father!

Scene 2 *(Westminster in Cannon Row; daughter of his Lordship speaking to Earl of Darby, 1599)*
COUNTESS OF DERBY: The girls were here earlier and Bridget tells me that she is to be married to Lord Francis Norris in April; she's very excited.
WILLIAM STANLEY, EARL OF DERBY: I was around to see your father before and he said that we should be hearing something like that soon, so I'm not surprised. He also said that *King Henry V* is to be performed; they say "Shakespeare's *Henry V"* by the *Lord Chamberlain's Men,* and they also say at "Shakespeare's Globe Theatre" in Southwark so what do you think about going? We've probably seen it at court, but this would be a larger production.

Scene 3 *(Lordship's studio, 1600)*
COUNTESS OF OXFORD: Were you ever able to get a license to play at the Blue Boar Inn?
LORDSHIP: Yes, and it's a good thing that we did. We can put on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *As You Like It* there.

Scene 4 *(At the breakfast table with the Countess, August, 1601)*
COUNTESS OF OXFORD: We have kippers for breakfast this morning. How would you like wheatear pie for dinner today and gooseberry tart?
LORDSHIP: That would be very good. I received word from my sister, Mary. Her husband, Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby has died. He will be buried at Spilsby, Lincolnshire.

COUNTESS: That is certainly too bad; I don't suppose you will be going to the funeral.

Scene 5 (*In his Lordship's library the following year, 1602)*
LORDSHIP: Will, since you are going into London, could you take these poems to the Court and see that her Majesty gets them, and also the other ones to Sir Robert Cecil's office, which is the Principal Secretary's Office? The third copies you could take to the Tower of London for Mr. Henry Wriothesley. Since the Queen was our guardian and looked upon us as her children, I've been sending poems every week for almost the last two years. Maybe by keeping the queen distracted, since her memory isn't as sharp as it used to be, she will forget about the sentence of the Earl of Southampton and I will be able to save him. He was involved with the Essex mix-up, you know. Do you know, since Lord Worcester's Players have merged with the Lord Chamberlain's Men, these players will be performing at the Boar's Head?
WILL: Yes, and they will need a lot more plays.

Scene 6 *(At de Vere's King's Place the following year; the printing of the Good Quartos, 1603)*
LORDSHIP: I've been thinking of getting some of this material printed, what we aren't showing with the actors at the Boar's Head or Blackfriars or renting to the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

WILL: Richard Field will probably give you the best price.
LORDSHIP: Yes, go around and see Richard and discuss it with him. Since the death of Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Southampton is to be set free, so I could say possibly that I achieved my objective in saving him. I knew Her Majesty liked things mythologized and euphuistic, so that is the way I wrote the *Sonnets*.

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(Snatches from History, cont. from p. 25)

Scene 7 *(de Vere studio, 1603)*

LORDSHIP: Since I am so far ahead on plays I am going to be writing a new version of the Bible for His Majesty King James. He had asked me at the Privy Council whether I would look into it. I would like to get it mostly done before it goes to Parliament in January.

COUNTESS OF OXFORD: Won't you be needing some help?

LORDSHIP: Yes, King James will be lending me two secretaries so that I can read the revision to them. Other people will be writing the manuscripts from my revision with committees and others to do the reference work. Parliament is to organize the remainder of the project in the near future.

Scene 8 *(Countess' house in the drawing room, after the death of Lord Oxford in 1604)*

COUNTESS OF OXFORD: I can let you have some of the remaining plays if they were used before at the Blackfriars or are already in print. Some of these others are unfinished, for instance the ones I hadn't included with the plays that Lord Derby will be working on.

WILL: I'll take the unfinished play copies, too, and look around for someone to finish them.

COUNTESS: I will be keeping a fair copy of each and the remainder that have never been performed or published I will also keep for the family.

(Will leaves; Says to audience and himself)

WILL: There's a new Lord Chamberlain and I bought all the parts that were ready. Too bad his Lordship died. I'll have to take these plays one at a time to get the patronage. Lord Southampton has probably donated a thousand pounds by now. With my profit I bought New Place a couple of years ago. With the new Lord Chamberlain, there's no need to give them any money. He doesn't know a thing about it. I can just take the money along to Stratford and just stay there. There won't be any more plays; that's for sure, and I don't like to stay around London here because they're always after taxes; I hate that. Why should I pay taxes when I'm from Stratford?

Scene 9 *(Summer 1604, at Countess of Oxford's house, Kings' Place, in the dining room; Ffrancis Trentham* to *his sister, Countess of Oxford, at the table*)

FFRANCIS TRENTHAM: On his Lordship's estate all debts have been paid. There is nothing outstanding.

COUNTESS OF OXFORD: Try some pickled herring. *(pause)* Do you mean to say I am out of the hole?

TRENTHAM: Yes, Bessie, everything is free and clear. His Lordship was already very close to being out of the hole, himself, a couple of years ago; what with selling the plays and doing the performances. There were also the rents collected and some more outlying property sold that wasn't bringing a good income.

COUNTESS: His Lordship never received the return of much of his property until several years ago, after Leicester's death. After all there were still obligations for employees and other people in his family since before his father's death. The quail is quite good that you shot; are they plentiful this year?

TRENTHAM: The de Vere property and wealth was being systematically transferred to Lord Burleigh. He was extremely wealthy when he died. He had probably become the wealthiest person in the Kingdom, even covering the entire reign of the Queen.

COUNTESS: He also had built a couple of the largest mansions in England, in the reign of Elizabeth, which were Cecil House and the flamboyant Theobalds Palace. He entertained the Queen there at least ten times. There are banberry cakes on the sideboard; help yourself.

TRENTHAM: Yes the quail are plentiful, some meadows have large flocks. Yet the payments from the Crown only partially repaid the damage and financial ruin of the de Vere estate from the time it was confiscated when his father died; some of it was when the Earl of Leicester had it, who raped and plundered property.

COUNTESS: Huge fines were often put on his Lordship at the instigation of Lord Burleigh. How are you getting along in this heat, but I must say it is cool in here?

TRENTHAM: Yes, it's very comfortable here. He had the example of the Earl of Somerset's criminal extortion of the 16th Earl and illegal fines that were never entirely put right. There was no other recourse since he was Lord Treasurer and Secretary of State.

COUNTESS: I don't know whether the Queen actually knew what went on. The tactic was to create financial pressure on his Lordship so that he would dispose of his properties very cheap. Lord Burleigh ended up with a huge number of the de Vere estates and properties, and all this also cut off income.

TRENTHAM: The de Vere property and wealth was being systematically transferred to Lord Burleigh. He was extremely wealthy when he died. He had probably become the wealthiest person in the Kingdom, even covering the entire reign of the Queen.

COUNTESS: He also had built a couple of the largest mansions in England, in the reign of Elizabeth, which were Cecil House and the flamboyant Theobalds Palace. He entertained the Queen there at least ten times. There are banberry cakes on the sideboard; help yourself.

TRENTHAM: If you want to see where his Lordship's wealth went, look at the Royal Palace of Theobalds, and also his three hundred landed estates. It is the same Royal Palace where King James lives now. So you can see it was Lord Burleigh who was extremely extravagant rather than his Lordship.

COUNTESS: He was indeed as extravagant as any royalty could be. The spectacular splendor of Theobalds was because it was actually built like Richmond Palace and its gardens were designed like Fontainebleau outside of Paris, which it rivaled in

splendor, and to think he had had nothing when he started.
TRENTHAM: You are right; the money was an astronomical amount and had to come from someplace, and that is why Lord Oxford had no wealth; it was stolen from him. Well, I must be going; I'll probably be seeing you on Thursday.

Scene 10 (*Globe Theatre*)
RICHARD BURBAGE: We have to get seven plays ready to present at King James' Court this winter. They are presenting them because Lady Susan de Vere is to be married to Lord Montgomery and also to remember her father. King James is to give her away because her father has died. We will be working on *The Tempest* for the wedding banquet. It is a new play her father had written for her wedding.

Scene 11 *(At the Countess' dinner table, Countess and Trentham, autumn, 1604)*
COUNTESS OF OXFORD: Lord Burleigh always ended up helping His Lordship out of the difficulty, but it never really went away; he was indeed the sly fox and dominated him his whole lifetime; in fact targeted him from the beginning. He was shameless, and he also had a less than favorable attitude to his Lordship's second marriage to me.
FFRANCIS TRENTHAM: Isn't that when the demands were made by the Court of Wards, controlled by Lord Burleigh, and large fines were also made. Could you please hand me that quince marmalade?
COUNTESS: Yes, it was most unreasonable. In the past the only financial advice had been from the person he would owe money to, who knew if payment was delayed it would multiply extraordinarily. Would you like some gingerbread?
TRENTHAM: Yes, I'll take some. So this was encouraged and things were deferred while his wife Anne was living. It was Lord Burleigh who was likely behind the Queen's making grants to his Lordship?
COUNTESS: Yes, because it gave him more opportunity to acquire money or divert it. Were there not likewise payments made to Francis Bacon, who was his wife's nephew. Why don't we go in and sit by the fire? The fire in here is completely burned down.
TRENTHAM: Why do you suppose Bacon was always in need of money in spite of the grant?

(Evening in the drawing room by the fire place with the fire lit, glasses of wine; Countess, Trentham, Henry, eleven years old)

COUNTESS: I have no idea if the Crown will continue the grants since his Lordship died. Ffrancis, it is such a bad night, why don't you stay tonight?

COUNTESS: He was, after all, presented as the paragon of virtue; even holier than thou, always the innocent, and yet he put out a great deal of disinformation about his Lordship and even outright slander, which he believed, while maintaining a puritanical attitude. You could say he was the puppeteer pulling strings. Any more wine, ffrancis? Henry, would you like some buttermilk; it will go with your gingerbread ?

TRENTHAM: Yes, I think I will do that. I believe it was to be a sort of compensation because his estates had been mismanaged by the Crown. *(Trentham puts a log in the fire)*
COUNTESS: Henry, dear, Uncle ffrancis is going to sleep in your bed. Will you go up and ask Mrs. Jones to make up the trundle bed for you. You can stay up until this fire burns down. His Lordship did not actually receive much of the money in Queen Elizabeth's reign.
HENRY: Mother, may I have some of the gingerbread with honey and nuts?
COUNTESS: Yes, ask Mrs. Jones to get you some.
TRENTHAM: Lord Burleigh made subtractions from it because he actually intended it for his daughter and himself and then after her death for his granddaughters. He also had an expensive life style to support.
COUNTESS: To show you how reluctant Lord Burleigh was to pay anything, he refused to pay a dowry to Lord Pembroke when it was arranged for Bridget to marry him. Lord Burleigh said it would be paid after his death, however, that was rejected so she never married the Earl. And how devious and greedy he was, even his Lordship had to go to Holland to collect an illegal Spanish bribe to Lord Burleigh that was to be his daughter Ann's dowry.
TRENTHAM: The manipulation and plunder of his Lordship's wealth was you could say extreme as long as Lord Burleigh was living. I suppose this would probably have all been accepted and viewed as legitimate considering his position.
COUNTESS: He was, after all, presented as the paragon of virtue; even holier than thou, always the innocent, and yet he put out a great deal of disinformation about his Lordship and even outright slander, which he believed, while maintaining a puritanical attitude. You could say he was the puppeteer pulling strings. Any more wine, ffrancis? Henry, would you like some buttermilk; it will go with your gingerbread ? *(Countess fills wine glasses)*
TRENTHAM: Very good, and where he could control life and death. He was not the patient long-suffering father-in-law except in the way he portrayed himself.
COUNTESS: Lord Burleigh's favorite thing to do was to point out the loss of his Lordship's wealth and blame him for squandering it. This was Lord Burleigh's smokescreen when there were others as well who had had a hand in it, although, I know his Lordship was many times generous to a fault and had some poor investments.
TRENTHAM: Some might say that it was a form of robbery. The help was mostly for Lord Burleigh and the Earl of Leicester, who was the Queen's favorite. They were high crimes and misdemeanors. Well I'm going to bed now; time to hit the hay.

[To be continued in the Fall 2013 issue.]

Review Essay

Shakespeare Beyond Doubt: Evidence, Argument, Controversy

Paul Edmondson, Stanley Wells, editors.

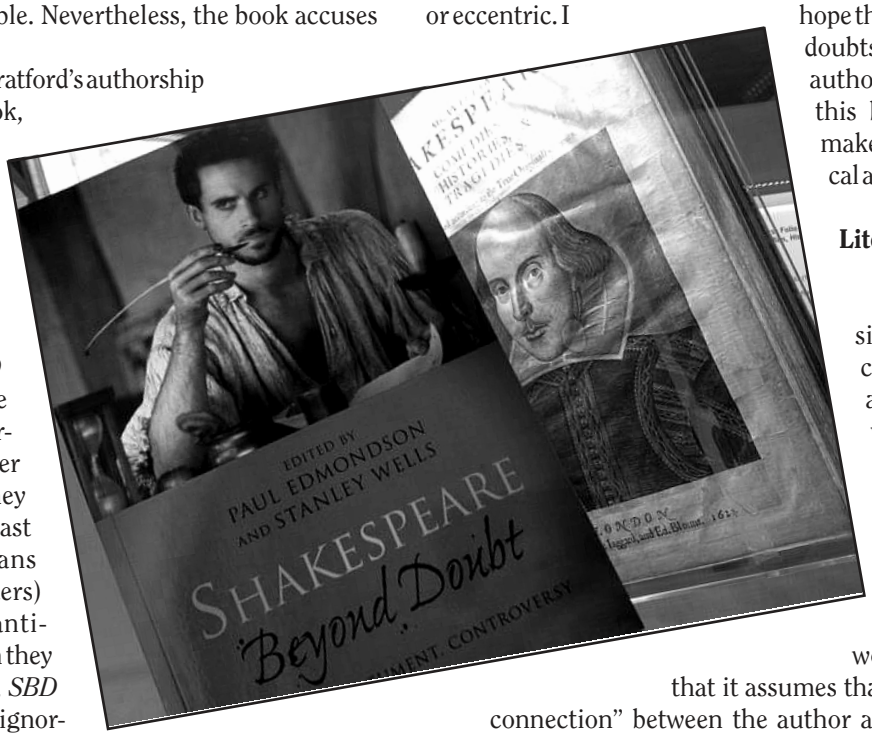
Cambridge University Press, 2013, 284 pages.

Reviewed by Tom Regnier

A few preliminary observations on *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt: Evidence, Argument, Controversy* (hereinafter referred to as *SBD*)*:*

First, the book's central message is that Shakespeare's works are not to be read as having anything to do with the author's life because there is no inherent connection between an author's life and the content of his works. This would seem like a worthy topic for exploration and discussion, but the authors of *SBD* are adamant that it is not debatable. Nevertheless, the book accuses its opponents of dogmatism.

Second, the man from Stratford's authorship is taken as "given" in the book, and the evidence supporting it is mentioned only in passing, but with little acknowledgement of the ambiguities inherent in it. Yet *SBD* accuses Shakespeare skeptics of being fanatics.



Third, the authors of *SBD* show little familiarity with the best anti-Stratfordian scholarship, most of which is never mentioned in the book. They focus on the craziest and least impressive anti-Stratfordians (Delia Bacon gets three chapters) and frequently misstate anti-Stratfordian scholarship when they bring it up at all. Meanwhile, *SBD* accuses anti-Stratfordians of ignoring the evidence.

Fourth, *SBD* takes an unbearably condescending attitude toward those who doubt the traditional theory of authorship. It at least admits that some anti-Stratfordians are reasonable people, but asserts that reasonable people can hold unreasonable views. Worst of all, the book makes a concerted effort to displace the word "anti-Stratfordian" with "anti-Shakespearian," arguing that if you don't believe in the Stratford theory of authorship, then you don't believe in Shakespeare. And *SBD* accuses its opponents of being bullies.

Fifth, *SBD* is dripping with appeals to authority. Don't question the professionals, who know better. "Open-mindedness" is a sin, at least when it comes to the authorship question. And *SBD* accuses "anti-Shakespearians" of snobbery.

Sixth, *SBD* does not attempt to answer the crucial question of how the Stratford man acquired the tremendous knowledge evident in the plays. *SBD* does not even acknowledge that the question exists. But the book compares anti-Stratfordianism to religious faith.

SBD is a book of propaganda, not scholarship. It is a web of attitudes, not ideas. Its method is to lull the reader into drowsy acceptance, not alert skepticism. It tries to shame the reader into agreeing with it for fear that he or she will seem odd or eccentric. I hope that every person who has doubts about the traditional authorship theory will read this book very closely and make a list of its many logical and evidentiary fallacies.

Literature as Biography?

Consider the proposition that there was no connection between an author's life and his works, at least in the Elizabethan age. Matt Kubus, echoing James Shapiro, argues in chapter 5 of *SBD* that the problem with reading the works biographically is that it assumes that there is an "inherent connection" between the author and "the content of his works." Before the Romantic Era, presumably, writers were more self-effacing, much too modest to write about themselves. They wrote more objectively about life, teaching parables about how to live as a member of society, not how to be a rebel, but how to successfully fit in. But is it really all that simple? Did human nature change suddenly during the Romantic Era?

I suspect that even before then, writers were expressing themselves, only not so obviously as the Romantics did. Doesn't the fact that a writer chooses to write a certain story tell us something about him as a person? Maybe the story doesn't follow the facts of his life like a thinly disguised autobiography, but a writer tells a story because it speaks to him in some way. Isn't it conceivable that all literary writing is, deep down, self-revelatory, that authors give themselves away in their writings in ways that they aren't always aware of?

Besides, weren't the seeds of the Romantic Era sown in *Hamlet*? Was there ever a character so aware of his own thoughts, his own struggles? I believe that it is an open question for any author how much and in what ways he reveals himself in his writings. Indeed, it should be a rich area for exploration and discussion. But the Stratfordians have decided to close that door, and the poorer they will all be for it.

The Case for Stratford

Stanley Wells (chapter 7) attempts to bolster the case for the Stratford man by listing every historical reference to "Shakespeare" up to 1642. As Wells admits, however, no reference to "William Shakespeare" before 1623, when the First Folio was published, explicitly identifies the writer with Stratford. All the references to Shakespeare up to that time are references to the written works of "William Shakespeare," whoever that was, but not necessarily to the Stratford man who died in 1616.

Because any evidence linking the works to Stratford is posthumous, Wells argues that we can't refuse to credit posthumous evidence. I agree that we shouldn't refuse *absolutely* to consider posthumous evidence. But while we might place some reliance on it, we are surely justified in giving it less credit than contemporary evidence. In legal terms, I would say that posthumous evidence is admissible, but a jury may be correct in giving it less weight than contemporary evidence. Wells argues that "if we refused to accept posthumous evidence we should have to refuse the evidence that anyone has ever died." This comment is ridiculous. Of course a person cannot report his own death, but evidence does not have to be self-reported.

In looking for evidence of the Stratford man as a writer, the testimony of other people is perfectly admissible. But a report right after an incident is more likely to be reliable than a report issued several years later. In the law of evidence, a statement made at the time of an occurrence is considered more reliable than a statement made long after the event, especially when a motive to fabricate may have arisen between the time of the incident and the time of the later statement. It is exceedingly odd that no written record clearly links the Stratford man to the works of Shakespeare until seven years after his death; skeptics are right in seeing that as a weakness in the Stratford theory.

Andrew Hadfield (chapter 6) makes a roundabout attempt to answer Diana Price's thesis that the Stratford man, unlike all other literary men of his day, left no literary paper trail during his lifetime. While Hadfield never mentions Price, he almost completely concedes her main point by saying, "there are virtually no *literary* remains left behind by Shakespeare outside his published works, and most of the surviving records deal with property and legal disputes" (emphasis added). Hadfield doesn't explain what the "virtually" refers to. He goes on to cloud the issue by pointing out that there are gaps in the historical records of many Elizabethan playwrights: we don't know, for example, specifics about Middleton's religion, Dekker's or Munday's education, or Nashe's date of death. This may be so, but Hadfield evades Price's point that for all of these writers there is contemporary evidence, linked to each man personally, of a *literary* career; for the Stratford man, there is none. This could mean that the evidence is lost, but it could also mean that it never existed. Considering the many anomalies in the existing evidence (none of it linking the Stratford man personally to the plays until seven years after his death), Shakespeare skeptics quite rightfully suggest that more research needs to be done.

In chapter 10, authors Mardock and Rasmussen reveal the astounding discovery that the 31 speaking roles in *Hamlet* can be performed by only 11 actors who play double or triple roles because—get ready for the revelation (sound of trumpets)—certain characters do not appear onstage at the same time! This type of information is so dazzling that James Shapiro even repeats it in his Afterword because it "proves" that Shakespeare had to be a professional man of the theater. But, realistically, is a playwright who writes a play with 31 characters likely to put them all onstage at the same time? Isn't it possible that an earl who had his own theater troupe (such as Oxford or Derby) might be aware of some of the practical problems of putting on a play? And the "doubling" revelation certainly does not by itself disqualify Christopher Marlowe as the Bard.

Matt Kubus, echoing James Shapiro, argues in chapter 5 of SBD that the problem with reading the works biographically is that it assumes that there is an "inherent connection" between the author and "the content of his works." Before the Romantic Era, presumably, writers were more self-effacing, much too modest to write about themselves. They wrote more objectively about life, teaching parables about how to live as a member of society, not how to be a rebel, but how to successfully fit in. But is it really all that simple? Did human nature change suddenly during the Romantic Era?

The general reader may be most impressed by MacDonald P. Jackson's discussion of stylometrics (chapter 9), which "proves" by computer analysis of grammatical patterns and word usage that the Stratford man wrote the vast majority of Shakespeare's plays with a little help from other playwrights of his time. Many

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(SBD Review, cont. from p. 29)

readers will readily believe anything a computer tells them, but a computer is only as good as the data and programs that go into it. If the program is flawed, the result will be flawed. Stylometrics, while it uses computers, still has its glitches. How do we know? Different stylometric analyses come out with different answers as to who collaborated with whom on what, as Ramon Jiménez has demonstrated.[1] Several years ago, Donald Foster attributed a poem called "A Funeral Elegy for Master William Peter" to William Shakespeare based on a stylometric computer analysis. Later analyses by Gilles Monsarrat and Brian Vickers showed Foster's attribution to be flawed and that the true author may have been John Ford. Foster admitted his error in 2002.

Stratfordians have always been skilled at the sophistic "straw man" technique of restating one's opponent's argument in its weakest form and then demolishing that argument to make plausible sounding, but inherently flawed, arguments. Here, they raise this ploy to an art form, usually by attacking the weakest spokespersons for their opponents' views. Their preferred target in SBD is Delia Bacon...SBD has three whole chapters mainly devoted to Delia Bacon. While no serious authorship skeptic of the past century relies on Delia Bacon's work, the Stratfordians can't get enough of her. They want to paint all doubters with the same brush and make the reader think she is a beacon to other anti-Stratfordians.

Besides, the most that stylometric studies show, as Jackson describes them, is that the person who wrote the bulk of the plays sometimes collaborated with others. They cannot prove that that central figure was the Stratford man because there is no known writing unquestionably belonging to the Stratford man to be used as a standard. As Ramon Jiménez has said, stylometric analysis "can never be more than a portion of the evidence needed to [identify the work of an individual author]. External evidence, topical references, and the circumstances and personal experiences of the putative author will remain important factors in any question of authorship." *SBD* urges us not to doubt the Stratford man just because Shakespeare scholars don't always agree among themselves about such matters as who the Bard's collaborators were. Apparently, disagreement is acceptable as long as everyone agrees that the Stratford was the main author—a premise that *SBD* never questions.

Battling Pygmies, Ignoring Giants

Stratfordians have always been skilled at the sophistic "straw man" technique of restating one's opponent's argument in its weakest form and then demolishing that argument to make plausible sounding, but inherently flawed, arguments. Here, they raise this ploy to an art form, usually by attacking the weakest spokespersons for their opponents' views. Their preferred target in *SBD* is Delia Bacon, who wrote an unreadable book about the authorship controversy and later went mad. *SBD* has three whole chapters mainly devoted to Delia Bacon. While no serious authorship skeptic of the past century relies on Delia Bacon's work, the Stratfordians can't get enough of her. They want to paint all doubters with the same brush and make the reader think she is a beacon to other anti-Stratfordians. The book even admits, in a condescending way, that she was right about a few things, except that she was grievously wrong in thinking that Shakespeare didn't write the plays attributed to him.

The condescension gets even worse. Poor Delia, *SBD* laments, she was denied a higher education because she was a woman. Then she wrote a book in which she argued that a powerful woman, Queen Elizabeth, suppressed some brilliant men such as Francis Bacon and Sir Walter Raleigh, who then secretly wrote plays about democratic ideals while hiding their identities behind the name "William Shakespeare." Andrew Murphy (chapter 15) sees through Delia Bacon's narrative, however, and reveals that she was really complaining about how she, as a woman, was suppressed. Bacon merely reversed the genders in her book and made it about a woman suppressing men, rather than men suppressing women! I am not making this up. Murphy even claims that you can't understand Shakespeare from his biography, but you can understand Shakespeare doubters from theirs. Apparently, anti-Stratfordians are just working out their inner neuroses by doubting Shakespeare, while the Stratford man wrote impersonally, from his imagination—no sweat, no personal involvement necessary.

But do the Stratfordians address any serious anti-Stratfordian scholarship in *SBD*? Diana Price, Tony Pointon, George Greenwood, Joseph Sobran, Ramon Jiménez, Richard Whalen, and Roger Stritmatter, to name just a few, are not mentioned. The Ogburns get a few sentences, but nowhere does *SBD* address the gist of their thesis. Looney also receives several nods along the way, but no one does a serious, thoughtful critique of his method for determining that Oxford was the real Shakespeare.

Charles Nicholl (chapter 3) quotes Looney's contention that the true author of the plays was not "the kind of man we should expect to rise from the lower middle-class population of the towns." Nicholl responds that Looney is wrong because many Elizabethan playwrights sprang from the lower middle-class. But Nicholl takes Looney's comment out of context. What Looney actually said is

that Shakespeare's "sympathies, and probably his antecedents, linked him on more closely to the old order than to the new: not the kind of man we should expect to rise from the lower middle-class population of the towns." Nicholl entirely misses Looney's point: Shakespeare's works evince an aristocratic viewpoint that is inconsistent with a lower middle-class upbringing. Looney was speaking about Shakespeare specifically based on the content of his works, not about playwrights in general. This is typical of the failure of the authors of *SBD* to truly engage with and respond to the writings of anti-Stratfordians.

Nicholl at least does us the service of explaining that spelling found in the published plays may not be the author's spellings, but may be those of compositors, whose spelling choices were often controlled by such factors as lineation and availability of type. Nicholl mentions this as part of an anti-Marlowe argument, but I wish he would explain the principle to Alan Nelson, who argues (not in *SBD*, but elsewhere) that Oxford couldn't be the true author because he used different spellings in his letters than are used in Shakespeare's plays.

Mark Anderson's thoroughly researched, copiously documented biography of the Earl of Oxford receives only a couple of mentions in *SBD*, in one of which Nelson dismisses it by saying, "For Anderson, scarcely an incident in Oxford's life remains unconnected to the Shakespeare canon; and scarcely a detail of the Shakespeare canon remains unconnected to Oxford's life." Actually, that's an accurate description of Anderson's book, which uncovers an astounding number of parallels between Oxford's life and Shakespeare's works. But Nelson just brushes all that aside in one sentence. He doesn't bother to point out any place that Anderson might be wrong.

As for Nelson's chapter on why the Oxford theory is supposedly wrong (chapter 4), I have little to add beyond the response to *SBD* posted on the Shakespeare Fellowship's website. Suffice it to say that Nelson argues that Oxford can't be Shakespeare because he killed a cook, was a spendthrift, was mean to his wife, and lived for a while with an Italian choirboy—obvious disqualifications for being the Bard. But maybe Nelson didn't read other chapters in *SBD* in which his co-authors chastise certain anti-Stratfordians for saying the Stratford man couldn't be the Bard because he was a grain hoarder and moneylender. If there is one lesson to be learned from *SBD*, it is that biography has nothing to do with it. If a grain hoarder could have written the plays, then so could a playboy. Nelson also makes the tired, old argument that Oxford couldn't have written *The Tempest* (long ago refuted by Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky) and tries to argue that the parallels between Oxford's life and *Hamlet* are few and far between.

Matt Kubus (chapter 5) argues that the sheer number of candidates destroys the anti-Stratfordian argument and that, mathematically, every time a new candidate is suggested, the probability decreases that it is the true author. If ever there were a facile argument, this is it. If your name is one of many to be drawn at random from a drum in a lottery, then, yes, the more names in the drum, the less likely it is that your name will be chosen. But the authorship question is not about drawing names from a drum. It is about examining the evidence for specific candidates. One should go about this through the standard scientific method, which Kubus describes as starting with a hypothesis, analyzing the data, and making a logical conclusion based on the facts. Once one actually does that, however, the number of serious candidates dwindles to a precious few.

In line with the *modus operandi* of *SBD*, Kubus examines only bad examples of anti-Stratfordian "research," such as wacky cryptogram theories and some pathetically stupid blogger he finds on the web, and then argues that alternative candidate theories are all the same. Again, this shows the lack of care and critical attention that the authors of *SBD* have paid to their adversaries.

Indeed, "misdirection," of the kind that a pickpocket uses to take your attention away from his hand while he steals your wallet, abounds in this book. It spends an inordinate amount of time on subjects that have nothing to do with serious authorship evidence or scholarship, including one chapter (16) on *fictional* treatments of the authorship question and another chapter (18) on the film *Anonymous*. Again, it's all part of a not so subtle attempt to leave the reader with the impression that all anti-Stratfordian writings are fictional and that the scenarios put forth in films and novels are exactly the ones believed by anti-Stratfordians.

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Douglas M. Lanier says of *Anonymous* that its "claim to historical authenticity is crucial to its case for Oxford as the true author of Shakespeare's plays." To knowledgeable Oxfordians, who were more adept than anyone else in pointing out historical

(Continued on p. 32)

(SBD Review, cont. from p. 31)

inaccuracies in the film, this is a howler. To Oxfordians, *Anonymous* was a merely a fiction that melded historical fact with fantasy. Yet Lanier would try to pawn off this film as the summit of anti-Stratfordian thinking. With Lanier, as with most of the authors of *SBD*, it is difficult to tell if he has simply never read any serious anti-Stratfordian scholarship or if he is purposely trying to throw the reader off the scent. I suspect that he has never read us. Many Stratfordians are probably wary of reading their adversaries' works for fear of being seduced by the sirens' song.

Kinder, Gentler Stratfordians

Hampton-Reeves in chapter 17 departs from the recent Stratfordian strategy of labeling all doubters as crackpots or mentally deranged. He appears as kinder, gentler, less fanatical, admitting that it is no longer possible to dismiss anti-Stratfordians as "ill-informed cranks." He understands that reasonable people can hold unreasonable opinions.

Except that the book doesn't call doubters "anti-Stratfordians." Instead, it calls them "anti-*Shakespearians*." As Edmondson and Wells explain in their introduction, the authors employ that word because "anti-Stratfordian . . . allows the work attributed to Shakespeare to be separated from the social and cultural context of its author." How's that for circular reasoning? We cannot doubt that the Stratford man was Shakespeare because we know that Shakespeare was from Stratford. According to *SBD*, to speak of "anti-Stratfordians" would be wrong because "to deny Shakespeare of Stratford's connection to the work attributed to him is to deny the essence of, in part, what made that work possible."

Got that? Shakespeare just wouldn't have been Shakespeare without Stratford. So, if you're against Stratford, you must be against Shakespeare. Or something like that. I guess this means that clues of a Stratfordian life are all over the plays and that's how we know the man from Stratford wrote them. Not that we read the works biographically, mind you. *SBD* is very clear about that. But, still, the works are full of Stratfordian words and references, as David Kathman argues in chapter 11, apparently oblivious of Michael Egan's devastating rebuttal in 2011 to similar claims by Kathman.[2] Undaunted, Kathman says that "ballow" and "mobbled" are uniquely Warwickshire words, despite Egan's having already refuted those assertions. As Egan pointed out, the Oxford Companion to Shakespeare (of which Stanley Wells is an editor) notes that "It is somewhat strange that Shakespeare did not . . . exploit his Warwickshire accent, since he was happy enough to represent, in phonetic spelling, the non-standard English of French and Welsh speakers, and the national dialects of Scotland and Ireland." Kathman does admit that the alleged presence of Warwickshire words in the plays "doesn't prove anything." At least he's right about something.

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Kathman's big point, however, is that Stratford was not a cultural backwater, but had many educated, cultured people. Some of the evidence for this is that many Stratfordians left long lists of book bequests in their wills. Kathman passes over in silence the anomaly that Shakspere mentioned no books in *his* will. Shakspere's friends, such as Richard Quiney, Thomas Greene, and Thomas Russell, all left documentary paper trails showing that they were literate and educated. To Shakspere, however, as Kathman admits, "No specific surviving books can be traced." Right again. It's strange how all the evidence of Shakspere's education vanished while that of his friends didn't.

And by the way, *SBD* hardly ever uses any other spelling than "Shakespeare" to refer to the Stratford man. When it does mention another spelling, it is for the purpose of showing how those bad old "anti-Shakespearians" are always trying to denigrate good old Will by misspelling his name, making it sound as if he is a different person from the one who wrote the plays under the name "Shakespeare." The purpose of this tactic is to make the reader come away thinking that the Stratford man always spelled his name "Shakespeare," the way it was spelled in the plays, when in fact there is no record that the Stratford man *ever* spelled it that way.

Don't Question Authority

The Declaration of Reasonable Doubt is derided in *SBD* as a declaration of faith, and also a declaration of loss of faith—faith in Shakespeare! Hampton-Reeves notes that the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition criticized James Shapiro for not engaging

with the Declaration's arguments and then states that he will also disappoint readers by not offering a point-by-point rebuttal. If these people won't, then who will? *SBD* has it backwards about who is operating on faith. Its authors believe that they are the high priests and we have "lost the faith" by failing to believe their self-evidently correct interpretation of the sacred texts.

Paul Edmondson's closing chapter (19) is particularly repugnant when it questions how anyone can be open-minded "given the positive historical evidence in Shakespeare's favour." He says that "open-mindedness" is merely a rhetorical maneuver and should be allowed only after the evidence for Shakespeare has been disproven, not (as Edmondson says) "merely ignored." "There is, too," says Edmondson, "the loaded assumption that even though one may lack the necessary knowledge and expertise, it is always acceptable to challenge or contradict a knowledgeable and expert authority. It is not." This is probably the least subtle of the many appeals to authority that pervade the book. Edmondson also compares anti-Stratfordians to bullies. Near the end, he says, "One likes to think that if there were any actual evidence that Shakespeare did not write the plays and poems attributed to him, then it would be Shakespeare scholars themselves who would discover and propagate it in their quest to know as much as possible about him." And may the fox guard the henhouse!

Shakespeare's Knowledge

Finally, *SBD* completely ducks (by never mentioning) the question of how the Stratford man acquired the vast knowledge of law, medicine, Italy, and a great many other subjects that is evident in the plays. In 1942, Paul Clarkson and Clyde Warren noted that: "Books by the score have been written to demonstrate [Shakespeare's] intimate and all pervading knowledge of such diverse subjects as angling, hunting, falconry, and horsemanship; military life, tactics, and equipment; navigation, both of peace and of war; medicine and pharmacy; an almost philological erudition in classical mythology; folklore, and biblical lore; and a sweeping knowledge of natural history, flora as well as fauna . . . agriculture and gardening; music, heraldry, precious stones, and even typography. . . jurisprudence—civil, ecclesiastical, common law, and equity."

Clarkson and Warren listed at least one book or article for every subject and noted that they could have listed many more. That was in 1942. Surely a much longer list could be compiled today with many more subjects—Italy, philosophy, astrology, and Greek drama, for example. The lesson to be learned from all these books about Shakespeare's knowledge in a vast array of subjects is that the author had a thorough and broad-ranging education and experience, which he often called upon to advance his dramatic purposes. The author of Shakespeare's plays very likely had extensive formal education, easy access to books, abundant leisure time to study on his own, and wide experience of the world gained through travel. This makes authorship by a nobleman more likely than that of the Stratford man. *SBD* fails to deal with this question because it simply can't.

One might have thought that, given the chance to put the authorship controversy to rest once and for all, the authors and editors of *SBD* would have laid out their evidence in all its glory, with clear, cogent explanations of its significance and coolly reasoned rebuttals to any arguments questioning its authenticity. That they have chosen instead to assert authority, disparage open-mindedness, and belittle adversaries says a great deal about the mindset and the state of scholarship, as it regards the authorship question, of the Shakespeare establishment.

Notes

[1] Ramon Jiménez, "Stylometrics: How Reliable is it Really?" in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt? Exposing an Industry in Denial*, John Shahan & Alexander Waugh, editors (Tamarac, FL: Llumina, 2013), Appx. B.

[2] *Exposing an Industry in Denial* (2011), reprinted in Part II of Shahan, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*

(Shakespeare Uncovered, cont. from p. 7)

and shocking moments in English history" and that when it was first performed, the play, which contained a scene showing the deposition of the monarch, was "deeply threatening to Elizabethan politics and threatening to the man who wrote it." Said Bate, "Shakespeare could have been thrown in the Tower or even executed." But the series never addressed why the author was not challenged by the authorities, even when the notorious scene was apparently presented for the public at the time of the Essex Revolt.

The only way to come to terms with this issue is to dig into the authorship question. But series producer Richard Denton categorically dismissed alternative views of authorship. In a January 25 interview, he stated that "conspiracy theories are enormous fun, but there has to be a really plausible explanation why everybody kept quiet about it…. It's an absurd idea. It's like 'The Da Vinci Cod**e.'**" In a documentary series with the goal of "uncovering" Shakespeare, there could have been a better effort to examine the "plausible explanations" that have been advanced by Oxfordian scholars for nearly a century. It is obvious that Denton and his writers have not read the books or seen the recent film *Last Will. & Testament*. One of Denton's stated goals was to inspire his children to love Shakespeare's plays. It is unfortunate that he was not more open-minded about the authorship question. If he were to probe deeper, his kids would have a greater understanding of the Tudor age and a greater appreciation of the literary works in the Shakespearean canon.

The final program of the series explored the thesis that *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* are Shakespeare's most personal plays. British actor David Tennant, who played Hamlet in a recent modern-dress RSC production, asks why it is that *Hamlet* is so "unique." But the program failed to put the play in context to identify why it was special. There was no discussion of the politics of the era and no mention of the court, including the key figure of William Cecil. The program never mentioned the numerous resemblances of the character Polonius to Cecil, which

(Continued on p. 34)

(Shakespeare Uncovered, cont. from p. 33)

have been identified by many scholars. The program's narrative unfolds in a vacuum, relying on routine plot synopsis rather than careful research and thoughtful critical analysis. Unlike the other programs in the series, the commentary of the actors in this segment seemed pedestrian. They discussed how playing the role of Hamlet triggered their own personal responses. Simon Russell Beale described the loss of his mother at the time he was playing Hamlet, but nothing about his acting process or preparation for the role. Jude Law struggled to articulate any main point about the actor's discipline in interpreting the famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy other than thinking about himself during the performance. The discussion was so mundane and so generalized that it was difficult to understand how the formulaic revenge structure of *Hamlet*, as described by Stephen Greenblatt, transcended such Elizabethan potboilers as *The Spanish Tragedy*. When the producers attempted to link *Hamlet* to the life of the author, the scene shifted to Stratford. We are told that the author "almost certainly learned Latin" at the local grammar school. He later lost his beloved son Hamnet, who died at age eleven. The close resemblance of the names Hamnet and Hamlet led Tennant and others to speculate that the author was writing a play to cope with the loss of his son.

At the end of the program, Nunn expressed his astonishment at the staggering achievement implied by the Shakespearean canon. According to the experts, the vast majority of the plays and poems were written within a single decade. For Nunn, "I can't begin to understand how he could have worked at such a pitch, at such a scale, in such a short span of time." Indeed! But Nunn never entertains the possibility that such an artistic output is not humanly possible, and that the true author undoubtedly spent several decades continually revising his works.

But that does not explain why the author would write a play about a son who has lost his father — not vice versa — as appropriate to these tragic circumstances. Without delving deeply into Hamlet's psychology, the program suggested that Hamlet is actually troubled not so much by the loss of his father, but much more profoundly by the actions of his mother in sleeping with and marrying Claudius. The program's conclusion about Hamlet is that "in the end, there is no other character like him," a conclusion drawn without the slightest examination of the essential sources that shaped the author's vision. A good place to begin might have been with the Renaissance philosophy of stoicism and with the text of *Cardanus Comfort*, as translated by Thomas Bedingfield with the preface by Edward de Vere. Such study might have helped to inform the actors to understand the lines they were speaking.

In the program on *The Tempest*, director Trevor Nunn claimed that "more than any of his other plays, it leads us to the essence of the man who wrote them." But once again, the writers and producers failed to offer convincing parallels between the life of the Stratford man and the author of the play. In attempting to explain what the play "tells us about Shakespeare himself," the most specific detail provided was that the man from Stratford was concerned about his younger daughter, Judith, in the same protective way that Prospero was guarding his daughter, Miranda. But the marriage of Judith Shakspere to vintner Thomas Quiney did not occur until four years after the producers claim that *The Tempest* was written. This connection is pure speculation, and the Judith Shakspere-Thomas Quiney relationship bears no resemblance to that of Miranda and Ferdinand.

For over a century in Shakespearean criticism, *The Tempest* has been considered Shakespeare's "farewell" to the theater, and the program recycled that hypothesis. Nunn asserts that it was Shakespeare's "last complete play" and that "after writing *The Tempest*, Shakespeare left London for good." But this point is contradicted in the standard Stratfordian biographies that describe in detail how the Stratford man continued to work in the theater, collaborating on such plays as *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII*, and how he traveled frequently from Stratford to London to oversee investments and to purchase property long after the conventional dating of *The Tempest* in 1611. The entire series offered no convincing evidence from the life of the man from Stratford that *The Tempest* or any other play or poem in the canon was intended as a farewell. Nor did it include any plausible autobiographical inferences based on the known life of the Stratford man. At the end of the program, Nunn expressed his astonishment at the staggering achievement implied by the Shakespearean canon. According to the experts, the vast majority of the plays and poems were written within a single decade. For Nunn, "I can't begin to understand how he could have worked at such a pitch, at such a scale, in such a short span of time." Indeed! But Nunn never entertains the possibility that such an artistic output is not humanly possible, and that the true author undoubtedly spent several decades continually revising his works. This would help explain the major textual discrepancies among the three variant editions of *Hamlet*, as witnessed by David Tennant in the British Library. It would also explain why the pattern of authorial self-revelation for the Stratford man makes no sense, as lamely examined in this program.

Shakespeare Uncovered asks the right questions and correctly identifies *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* at the heart of the author's self-portrait. But the answers to those questions are

(History of Anonymity, cont. from p. 3)

novels, Thomas Hardy's first novel, the first two volumes of Sterne's *Tristam Shandy*, Blake's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," Byron's "Beppo" and the first two cantos of "Don Juan," and even non-fiction works such as John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*.

Mullan details the extraordinary measures Swift used to conceal his authorship, employing intermediaries and copyists. Swift's literary friends knew full well what he was doing, but they kept up the charade in correspondence with third parties and even with Swift himself. John Gay, who almost certainly had copied letters for Swift, wrote to Swift to tell him of *Gulliver's Travels*, "a Book you have never seen," and suggested that if the satire in the book was too obscure, Swift could return to England from Dublin and have someone explain it to him.

Although Mullan's book focuses mainly on seventeenth and eighteenth century literary anonymity, he touches on a few instances from the Elizabethan era. He notes that Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar* was published in 1579 without an author's name, though it bore a dedication; the author was "a person without distinction or fame who was presenting his poetic offering to [Philip] Sidney." Spenser's authorship was hinted at by other writers during the 1580s, and Spenser eventually acknowledged it in 1590. Mullan also mentions the Martin Marprelate pamphlets (1588-1589), which showed "how prose satirists could exploit a self-protective anonymity to let loose something more complex than polemic: mockery, parody, impersonation."

We modern readers should all keep in mind the long history of literary anonymity and pseudonymity as we continue to study the Shakespeare Authorship Question, for it helps to provide context. First, it was far from uncommon for works to be published without the true author's name on them; indeed, astute contemporary readers probably didn't expect that the name on the title page (if there was one) was that of the true author. Second, those who were in a position to know of a writer's true identity – family members, close friends or fellow writers – kept the confidence. They had no interest in "outing" an anonymous or pseudonymous author, though no doubt some dropped hints here and there for the benefit of a knowledgeable reader. This sense of deference to an author's wishes persisted for centuries. Even John Leycester Adolphus observed that formality when he obliquely identified Walter Scott as the author of the *Waverley* novels in 1821, noting that "The novelist had chosen anonymity and so, even if a book is designed to settle the attribution of his novels, it would be ungentlemanly to handle his real name."

An understanding of the history and culture of literary anonymity also helps us to answer one of the most frequently asked questions posed by newcomers to the Shakespeare Authorship Question, which is "If Oxford was really Shakespeare, why did the coverup continue long after the deaths of both Oxford and Shakspere?" A question phrased that way reflects a twentieth or twenty-first century mindset, when we assume that everyone would want to know an author's true identity. That mindset did not exist in Shakespeare's time, when great deference would have been given to the wishes of an author and his literary executors. That explains why all we have are hints about Shakespeare's true identity, and that also gives special meaning to a line from *As You Like It*, Act 5, scene 1, when Touchstone is berating the ignorant local yokel William: "For all your writers do consent that *ipse* is he; now you are not *ipse*, for I am he."

— Alex McNeil

(Death of Oxford, cont. from p. 13)

Just before his death he transferred real and personal property, partly by sale and partly by trust, to his wife's brother, to his daughter Bridget's husband and to his cousin, Sir Francis Vere. The land was to be held in trust until his son, Henry, eleven years old in 1604, came of age. The details of these transactions are discussed in the two articles cited above. It all looks carefully planned.

If Oxford's death was a suicide, there would still be reason for keeping it a secret. There is no record of a funeral or burial, and no elegies or epitaphs appeared in the succeeding weeks or months. No mention of his death is found in letters of his contemporaries. Just silence. His grave has never been located. Southampton was arrested on the day of his death, but was promptly released. Reason unknown.

Hank Whittemore, in his study of the Sonnets (*The Monument*) proposes that an interior sequence of 100 sonnets (Sonnets 27 to 126) was intended to be a monument to Southampton, who, Whittemore maintains, was the illegitimate son of Oxford and Elizabeth and the heir to the throne. But if 100 sonnets are a monument to Southampton, and there are a total of 154 sonnets, what significance do the other 54 have as a monument? Oxford died at age 54. Accidentally or by planned intention?

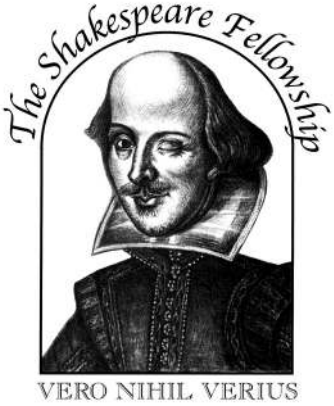
Let us return to the three heraldic shields of words as appearing in the Sonnets dedication. Was the first and largest shield for the Queen, the second and smallest for Oxford, and the third for Prince Tudor?

If Oxford's death on the date of June 24 was simply an unforeseen accident, then a number of seemingly miraculous coincidences must have occurred.

(from the President, cont. from p. 2)

Annual conference. Please join us for our ninth annual Joint Conference with the Shakespeare Oxford Society in Toronto, October 17-20. The conference will include a visit to Stratford, Ontario, to see a production of *The Merchant of Venice*. See details in this issue, page 4, and on our website.

—Tom Regnier



(Shakespeare Beyond Doubt, cont. from p. 19)

an Industry in Denial"), complaining that the "implied slur is that we're trying to protect our financial interest, it's impugning our scholarly integrity. . . . We have put our case very firmly and strongly. We have had many very rigorous debates and discussions." When asked about a possible debate, Wells replied, "If we receive a formal challenge, then we will look at it on its merit."

John Shahan also offered *Shakespeare Matters* this comment: "Stratfordians must be in shock that we responded to *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* so quickly, and with a book that is clearly superior to theirs in addressing the evidence. Here they thought they were putting a stake in the heart of the authorship controversy, when actually they were giving it a whole new life. There's no way we could have gained this much attention unless they attacked us first, giving us an opportunity to respond on something close to a level playing field. I can't wait to see the reviews."

Both books are available through the usual online outlets. *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt? Exposing an Industry in Denial* is also available directly from Llumina Press in the US (www.llumina.com/store/shakespeare.htm) and from Parapress in the UK: www.parapress.co.uk/books/shaks_beyond_doubt.php. Kindle and Nook editions are also available.

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