



The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



Vol.32: no.1

"Let me study so, to know the thing I am forbid to know"

Winter 1996

The Problem of The Funeral Elegy

by Joseph Sobran

News item: With the aid of computers, scholars are attributing a poem titled "A Funeral Elegy," published in 1612 and signed "W.S.," to William Shakespeare.

"Well, Holmes," I said, laying down the morning paper, "have you seen the report of the newly discovered 'Funeral Elegy' by Shakespeare?"

"I have heard something about it," Sherlock Holmes replied. "But I confess I have not given it my full attention. Perhaps, my dear Watson, you will be so kind as to enlighten me."

"An American scholar named Donald Foster, who found the poem, has determined, with the aid of modern computer methods, that it closely matches the style of Shakespeare." Here I am afraid I yielded to the temptation to gloat at my old companion's expense. "If he is right, Holmes, it certainly explodes your strange notion that the Earl of Oxford was the real author."

"Indeed?" he said with mild surprise, but without removing the pipe from his mouth.

"Oh, most certainly. You see, the poem was written in 1612. Having been dead for eight years, my lord of Oxford could hardly have written it."

"My understanding is that the Elegy was published in 1612. That is a different matter. It may actually have been written many years earlier."

I shook my head. "Impossible, Holmes. The subject of the Elegy is a young man named William Peter, who was murdered near Exeter in January of 1612. The poem was registered for publication three weeks later by Thomas Thorpe, who was also the publisher of Shakespeare's Sonnets."

"There is no chance of a mistake?"

"I am afraid not. The title page makes it quite clear that Peter is the deceased man, and the poem indirectly confirms the fact."

"Indirectly?"

"It contains an oblique play on the name

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To Our Members: From New President Charles Vere



Outgoing Society President Richard Whalen addresses members at the 19th Annual Conference. See page 4 for a report on the Conference.

It was a great honor for me to be voted President of the Society at the Greensboro meeting, and I hope to prove myself worthy of your trust in the coming months and years. It is a responsibility that I take very seriously, and I have high hopes for the future of our Society. I have a hard act to follow.

My predecessor, Richard Whalen, steered the Society skillfully and tirelessly over two thorny years of change and growth. A measure of his immense energy is the fact that he managed to write and publish a book during his busy tenure. That book *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* is now one of the meanest guns in the Oxfordian armory.

To those of you who might object to my age, I can only say that I am a seasoned Oxfordian, having been actively involved in the movement for ten years now, and passively through my blood ever since I first smelt the air.

Nor can any one doubt the commitment to our common cause of someone who has been foolhardy enough to embark on an open-ended lecture tour, that has taken him to some 42 States over the last four years, and has engendered giving in excess of 200 lectures for little more than a pittance!

This is not to say, however, that it hasn't been a most enriching and rewarding experience in other ways. Not only have I had a unique opportunity of seeing a great deal of your beautiful and puzzling land, but, more importantly, I have been the grateful recipient of your marvellous hospitality the length and breadth of these United States. We Oxfordians are a fiercely loyal and tight-knit group, and I have

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Inside... More on Funeral Elegy:

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World Shakespeare Congress to be held in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES. The International Shakespeare Congress, in conjunction with the Shakespeare Association of America, will be holding its quinquennial meeting at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles April 7th through April 14th.

We encourage all members of the S.O.S. to join the Shakespeare Association of America (\$25 per year) in order to ensure that Oxfordians have a significant voice in the proceedings of our rival organization. So far we have around 18 members in the S.A.A. With 20 or more we are empowered to submit resolutions by written petition to the decision of the Trustees.

This year will be special for Oxfordians at the S.A.A. as we are holding our own wine and cheese reception at the Biltmore Hotel on Friday the 12th of April from 5-7 p.m. in the Grecian/Athenian/Corinthian Suite of Rooms.

We are indebted to Carol Sue Lipman for her organization of the event and to Russell des Cognets Jr. for his most generous sponsorship. This will be an opportunity for professors to meet with us on an informal basis and hear what we have to say about Shakespeare the man.

Charles Champlin, Arts Critic Emeritus of the *Los Angeles Times*, has agreed to act as master of ceremonies, and British actor Michael York has agreed to attend and say a few words about his involvement in the issue.

Charles Vere will present a 20-minute case for Oxford's authorship. Also invited will be Sir Derek Jacobi and Keanu Reeves, the hot young Hollywood actor who recently nailed his colors to the Oxford mast. We urge you all to take out membership in the S.A.A. and join us in L.A.

To apply for membership, write to:

The Shakespeare Association of America,
Department of English,
P.O. Box 4033,
Southern Methodist University,
Dallas, TX. 75275-0433.

That Way Madness Lies Elegy Conference in LA still leaves questions

By Carol Boettger

LOS ANGELES, FEB. 9. A conference on the poem, *Funeral Elegy for Master William Peter* by W.S. (published in 1612) was held at UCLA Friday afternoon, with the poem's discoverer Donald Foster and three other well known Shakespeare authorities participating in a panel discussion.

The conference was opened by Professor Robert Watson of UCLA. The first speaker was Prof. David Holmes of the University of the West of England, a statistician who discussed history and methods of statistical authorship studies. He complimented Don Foster's computer authorship program as being "successful".

Next was Professor Donald Foster of Vassar who stated that he was "quite convinced that [Funeral Elegy] cannot have been written by any one other than Shakespeare." He defended the "plainness" of the poem as being a conscious decision by the poet to create a symbolic union with his "plain speaking" friend, the deceased Wil-

liam Peter. (He credited Richard Abrams as the originator of this interpretation.)

Foster acknowledged that the poem was very different from the sonnets, but observed that early readers of the Sonnets considered them unlikable, obscure, and tedious. Foster stated that the evidence was inconclusive in 1989 when his book *Elegy by W.S.: A study in Attribution* was published.

Now, however, on the basis of new computer evidence, including his own Shaxicon program, Foster states that Shakespeare did write *Funeral Elegy*. He said that the similarities between Shakespeare's works and *Elegy* cannot be due to deliberate imitation of Shakespeare by the author of *Elegy*. For example, the use of the words "who" and "whom" to refer to an inanimate object is one such similarity between Shakespeare and the author of *Funeral Elegy*.

Foster commented that in the years since the 1989 publication of his book, there had been no systematic rebuttal of the attribution of *Funeral Elegy* to Shakespeare. He said that the establishment of Shakespeare as the author of *Funeral Elegy* would provide a context for future reading, and would make us "better readers" of Shakespeare.

The third speaker, Prof. Lars Engle of the University of Tulsa, also stated that he believes Shakespeare to have been the author of *Funeral Elegy*, and that he was now attempting to persuade others to extend the Shakespeare cannon to include *Funeral Elegy*. Referring briefly to the topic of whether Shakespeare's works were authored by de Vere, Engle remarked "that way madness lies".

Engle said that *Funeral Elegy* was written quickly, as was *Merry Wives of Windsor*. He acknowledged that there is an apparent discrepancy between "nine of years ... in his bed" (*Elegy* lines 511 and 512, which refer to the deceased's wife of nine years) and the fact that the historical William Peter had been married only three years at the time of his death. He theorized that William Peter could have had a mistress at Oxford for nine years prior to his return home and

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Frontline to rebroadcast The Shakespeare Mystery

BOSTON. PBS's *Frontline* will air *The Shakespeare Mystery* on April 23. The show was first broadcast in April 1989, and was the turning point in the lives of many of our current Society members, whose first real look at the details of the Shakespeare authorship debate came through this show.

WGBH-TV in Boston plans to create a web site on the Internet as a companion to the show, and have already contacted the Society about links with our existing Home Page and input on current Oxfordian points of view. Stratfordians will be asked to contribute their side of the debate to the new web site, which will also include audio clips from recent authorship debates.

The Board of Trustees strongly encourages members to plan local publicity campaigns around the airing of this program.

Oxford prevails in NYC Bar Association debate

NEW YORK, OCT. 13. Friday the 13th turned out to be a good day for the Oxford cause in New York as one half of the Stratfordians attending the Association of the Bar of the City of New York's debate on the authorship wound up voting for Oxford.

Moderating *Shakespeare Cross Examination: Were the Shakespeare plays actually written by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford?* was Daniel Kornstein, author of *Kill All the Lawyers?* Speaking for Shakspeare of Stratford was Professor Dennis Kay of Oxford University (who is on a visiting fellowship to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte); speaking for Edward de Vere was Charles Vere, the Earl of Burford.

Professor Gary Taylor of Brandeis University, and author of *Reinventing Shakespeare*, had been scheduled to participate, but withdrew a mere ten days before the debate. On sabbatical in rural Alabama Professor Taylor was said to be concerned about the travel arrangements ("Shall I fly, or shall I die?").

Therefore, Professor Kay, who is the author of a recent biography of Shakespeare and is an expert on the Earl of Oxford, was asked at the last minute to fill in. He most graciously obliged, and proved to be an excellent debater as well as a gentleman and a true scholar, and handled the debate with honesty, courtesy and wit.

Each speaker had 25 minutes to make his case. Then there was a period of cross-examination directed by Mr. Kornstein during which the speakers had an opportunity to directly question their opponent on points he had made in his opening statement. This was followed by formal rebuttals of 15 minutes each, at which point questions were allowed from the floor before a final closing statement from each speaker. Mr. Kornstein summed up while the vote was being taken. The audience acted as the jury and were asked to mark their ballots twice, once to indicate how



Daniel Kornstein, Charles Vere and Dennis Kay found themselves together again in NYC just two weeks after they participated in the Renaissance Roundtable at the Annual Conference in Greensboro.

they felt before the proceedings and once to indicate their opinion after hearing both sides debate.

Charles Vere was the first to speak, and concentrated on the topical nature and political content of the plays. He was at great pains to place Shakespeare, the author, in his political, historical and cultural context, making the point that you can't divorce an artist from the age in which he lives if you intend to truly understand him. He said that one of the primary tests of authorship for him was whether or not the candidate proposed forced us to make assumptions about the age which were patently untrue. As one example he cited sonnet 69 in which the author scolds the Fair Youth for becoming "common." Nearly all Stratfordians concede that the Fair Youth is a nobleman, even a high-ranking nobleman, such as the 3rd Earl of Southampton. Yet their acceptance of Shakspeare as the author forces us to make an assumption about Elizabethan society that is patently untrue: namely that a man of Shakspeare's station could with impunity (or even would) describe a nobleman as vulgar - and in print. To make such an assumption is to turn the mores and ethos of Elizabethan society on their heads. Yet such assumptions have to be made again and again if one wishes to accommodate the Stratford man as author.

Vere then went on to argue that *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's autobiography, and that this play is the key to unlocking all the secrets of the authorship mystery. Above all he stressed that it is in this play that Shakespeare provides us with his modus operandi. In other words the "Mousetrap" is to *Hamlet as Hamlet* is to the Elizabethan Court saga. One tells the story of the other

through allegory, and both plays are more than stage entertainments: they are acts of political will from the pen of that most artistic of political dissidents at the Royal Court, Edward de Vere.

If, on the other hand, he argued, one posits the Stratford man as the author of and the individual behind *Hamlet*, then the play immediately loses its exciting sense of reality. Vere then asked the audience who, from a psychological point of view, was the more plausible author of *Hamlet*: Shakspeare or de Vere?

Or to paraphrase Delia Bacon in her 1857 masterpiece *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakspeare (sic) Unfolded*: "Who was Shakespeare? Was he Hamlet himself, the subtle Hamlet of the university, the courtly Hamlet, the 'glass of fashion and the mould of form', who addresses the players with such princely condescension, or is he one of that dirty, doggish group of players, who come into the scene summoned like a pack of hounds to Hamlet's service?"

In his presentation Professor Kay avoided making a case for the Stratford man's authorship and concentrated his attention instead on the claims of the Earl of Oxford, and here he proved himself virtually unique among Stratfordian academics. Instead of downplaying the Earl of Oxford's flair and innovative skills as a poet, or even denying them completely, he praised the Earl fulsomely as one of the most original and talented poets of the age, and one, indeed, who laid the foundation for that great palace of dainty delights known as the golden age of Elizabethan literature. He quoted with approval from the known poetry of Oxford and acknowledged cer-

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19th Annual Conference in Greensboro, NC

The 19th Annual Conference of The Shakespeare Oxford Society was held in Greensboro, North Carolina, from September 28 to October 1, 1995. Approximately 125 Oxfordians from around North America and Great Britain attended.

The event was kicked off by the *Renaissance Roundtable on Shakespeare and the Law*, held on Thursday night at Guilford College. Retired Chief Justice of the NC Supreme Court, James Exum, Jr. presided. The panelists were Daniel Kornstein, author of *Kill all the Lawyers?*, Dennis Kay, Oxford University Lecturer and Russell Robinson Chair in Shakespeare, UNC-Charlotte, Russ McDonald, Dept. of English and Shakespeare scholar, UNC-Charlotte, Edward Bander, author of *Shakespeare and the Law* (soon to be published), and Shakespeare Oxford Society Trustees Leonard Deming, who is also a lawyer in Nashua, New Hampshire, and Charles Vere, Earl of Burford.

The audience numbered 550, including Conference attendees, members of the Guilford College community, Greensboro Chapter of the English Speaking Union, and the Greensboro Bar Association.

While the topic was Shakespeare and the Law, the general thrust of most of the discussion throughout the evening inevitably turned to the authorship question. How well did Shakespeare know the law, and how does the extent of his knowledge affect the debate over who he was? Lawyers Kornstein and Bander and academics Kay and McDonald all emphasized in their comments that whatever Shakespeare knew could have been acquired without he himself having been a lawyer.

Oxfordians Len Deming and Charles Vere countered that Shakespeare's grasp of the law went far beyond the competent use of legal terminology. Rather it constituted a whole metaphorical system of thought. It was one more instance of the author of the Shakespeare Canon having a sophisticated working knowledge on matters that are clearly beyond the scope of the Stratford man's world. A lively question and answer session followed the Forum.



Panelists at the *Renaissance Roundtable on Shakespeare and the Law* are, from left to right, Russ McDonald, Daniel Kornstein, Len Deming, moderator James Exum, Charles Vere, Dennis Kay, and Edward Bander.

This Conference had many activities for attendees to choose from, indeed more than any one person could attend. In addition to the usual presentation of papers, there was a Teachers Workshop with 37 participants from high schools in North Carolina, and Society members Rollin De Vere (author of *Hawk from a Handsaw*), Richard Whalen and others offering guidelines and advice on how to incorporate the authorship and the Oxford theory into lesson plans on Shakespeare. Richard Whalen's new teachers' guide was distributed to all attendees.

Stephanie Hughes met with Oxfordians interested in planning research projects for the coming years, with emphasis on areas where new primary research could prove fruitful.

This turned out to be a lively session, with many ideas for future plans. Stephanie will keep all those who attended (and any others interested) in touch with an occasional newsletter for Oxfordian researchers.

A computer was hooked up in the Hospitality Room for ongoing demonstrations of the Internet and World Wide Web by Bill Boyle and Marty Hyatt. Attendees could see for themselves the new Shakespeare Oxford Society Home Page and get a taste of the rest of this brave new world of cyberspace.

Verily Anderson, author of *The De*

Veres of Castle Hedingham, narrated a slideshow titled "An Armchair Tour of De Vere Country"

Other special events included trustee Sally Mosher's Harpsichord Recital, featuring works by William Byrd, such as the Earl of Oxford's March, and a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival on Saturday night, and *Macbeth* on Sunday afternoon. It is safe to say that no one attending this year's conference could have sampled everything.

Among the papers presented this year, Robert Brazil's probably drew the most comment. In his "Curious Clues from Title Pages", Brazil presented reproductions of the quartos published throughout the 1590s and early 1600s, and showed how each of them generally had elaborate woodcut emblems on the cover with a preponderance of brief mottoes that featured the use of Latin words such as *Ver*, *Vir* and other variants beginning with the letter "V". In his analysis of the emblems, he made a pretty convincing claim that authorship clues had been deliberately embedded in the title pages of the Shakespeare quartos.

This work is in its early stages, and more comparison with other non-Shakespearean quartos is needed before any conclusions can be drawn. But it was nonetheless an entertaining and thought provoking presentation.

Richard Whalen's presentation on "The Lost Years of Edward de Vere" was also quite interesting for the clues it revealed about possible 18th and 19th century awareness of de Vere. In particular Whalen drew attention to an early 19th century book entitled *De Vere: Man of Independence* (this paper was published in the fall 1995 newsletter, and is also now available through the internet on the *Ever Reader*, the Society's online magazine).

Roger Stritmatter took time off from his study of de Vere's *Geneva Bible* to talk about Edmund Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, and explore who could be the real life model for "Cuddie". Roger offered an excellent case for identifying Cuddie as Edward de Vere.

Charles Boyle ("Much Virtue in If"), Andy Hannas ("Hamlet's Much Offended Text"), Charles Vere ("Bottom's Lost Kingdom") and Betty Sears ("Sonnets") all presented papers that analyzed Shakespeare's writing as only Oxfordians can, with a keen eye on the underlying political, personal and contemporaneous subtext that is what makes Shakespeare, well, Shakespeare.

Vere's paper was the last on Saturday afternoon, and provided the perfect send-off for attending *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that evening.

And finally, Diana Price took on the authorship debate itself with her paper "Authorship Cover-up: Conspiracy or Convention?" Price argued that it was primarily the convention of the time for nobles not to use their names, especially if involved with the theatre, and it was simply this convention and not political conspiracy of any sort that lead to the First Folio attribution of the Canon to the Stratford actor. As most of our readers know, this is a controversial aspect of the entire authorship debate, both between Oxfordians and Stratfordians, and among Oxfordians. This topic also engendered much discussion among Conference attendees.

The keynote speaker for the three day event was Sue Ellen Bridgers, award winning author of adult and juvenile works. Ms. Bridgers delighted Oxfordians with her own story of finding the Oxfordian answer to the Shakespeare mystery. Her book *Keeping Christina* (1993) presents the theory as part of a high school debate, a debate in which those presenting the Ox-

ford side win the day!

At the closing luncheon on Sunday Christopher Dams, Secretary of the De Vere Society, addressed his fellow American Oxfordians with news from England, some stories about visiting the Stratford shrine, and a few thoughts on having Oxfordians "set up shop" in Stratford. He also encouraged members to join the De Vere Society, which now has its own newsletter.

In all, it was a wonderful weekend for those who attended the full Conference or

even just parts. And we must note that in each year of the 1990s the Annual Conference grows a little larger, just as the Shakespeare Oxford Society continues to grow.

Our congratulations and gratitude to Conference Chair Trudy Atkins, her patient family, and all those in Greensboro that helped make the 19th Conference a success.

See you in Minneapolis.

W. Boyle

20th Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Oct. 10-13

The Twin Cities Chapter of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, under the guidance of George Anderson, will host the 20th Annual Conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society in Minneapolis, Oct. 10-13. The city is home of the Guthrie Theater, whose founder, Sir Tyrone Guthrie, was an early supporter of the Oxfordian point of view.

The Hotel Sofitel in Bloomington (10 miles from downtown Minneapolis) will host most conference activities and provide rooms for conference attendees at special rates. This French hotel is considered one of the finest in the Twin Cities region. (Call 800-786-6303 for accommodations, or send a fax to 612-835-2996). Northwest airlines will offer 5% discounts off their lowest rates (call Connie at Carlson Travel, 612-788-7770). The famous Mall of America (one of the world's largest malls) is just 7 miles from the Hotel.

Conference Chairman George Anderson announced in Greensboro that they hope to offer "conference scholarships" to graduate students or others studying the authorship question to help them attend the Minneapolis Conference. To do this, some private donations will be needed, so anyone thinking of making donations or gifts to the Society might keep this in mind.

As of this date journalist and author Joseph Sobran and British actor Michael York are scheduled to attend and speak at the Conference.

The address for the Conference Organizing Committee is:

Twin Cities Organizing Committee
George Anderson, Chair
1100 W. 53rd St.
Minneapolis, MN 55419
(612)823-2957
email: GRA55419@aol.com

Call for Papers for the 20th Annual Conference

Individuals wishing to present papers at the Conference should send them to:

Charles Vere
84 Chandler St. #2
Boston MA 02116

Papers should be delivered typed double space, or on disk in ASCII format, Word Perfect 5.1 or Word 6.0 no later than July 1, 1996

Length should be based on a presentation time of approx. 30 minutes

The following letter was composed by Joseph Sobran to be circulated to the attendees of the Greensboro conference. Unfortunately, it didn't arrive in time, so we are taking the liberty of presenting it to the whole membership as the issues it addresses are vital to the integrity of the Society.

To place the letter in context, it should be explained that Joseph Sobran was one of the featured speakers at the Greensboro conference. He had been invited to give a paper on Oxford's poetry, a subject on which he has done a good deal of original and innovative work, not least in discovering new parallels between Oxford's early poems and the works of Shakespeare. Sadly, and much to the discredit of the Society, Joseph Sobran was disinvited barely ten days before the start of the conference. The letter we are printing is Mr. Sobran's objection to the action of the Board of Trustees, which made the decision to withdraw his invitation. This was not a unanimous decision, but a majority one.

A certain member of the Society had taken offence at Mr. Sobran's political views, as expressed in his newsletter "Sobran's", and had taken it upon herself to draw up a petition (containing 14 signatures including her own), which she then presented to the Board. The President, Richard Whalen, proceeded to take a telephone vote of the trustees, who voted 12 to 3 to remove Mr. Sobran from the Greensboro program. It was a decision made in haste and under a good deal of pressure, and it is known that a number of the trustees have since regretted their decision. Hence we thought it right and healthy to allow Mr. Sobran his say.

Joseph Sobran is a valuable member of the Oxfordian movement, who has published extensively on Oxfordian topics. His new book *Outing Shakespeare* is due to appear this Fall, and he has accepted an invitation to speak at the Minneapolis conference.

Charles Vere

An Open Letter from Joseph Sobran to the members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society

October 15, 1995

Dear Fellow Oxfordian:

A few months ago I was asked to speak to the Greensboro meeting of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. I gladly agreed to do so - as a favor, and without compensation.

I planned to share with you an exciting new body of evidence, from Oxford's own hand, linking him to "Shakespeare." It proves his authorship beyond any reasonable doubt. I believe you'd have found it as electrifying as I have, and I was eager for your reaction.

Unfortunately, the SOS trustees have revoked my invitation to speak. Almost incredibly, the reason for this action is that a few members have objected to my political views which of course have nothing to do with either Oxford or the subject of my intended talk. I was given no chance to defend my right to speak (and, just as important, your right to hear me) against a crude and hysterical attack on me, which was withheld from me until just the other day. The attackers evidently felt that their furtive handiwork could not stand up to open debate.

I wasn't even informed of this silencing operation until it was too late to counteract it. Nor were you. Your rights and views have been contemptuously ignored by a small group who, without consulting you, claim to be "representative" of you. You've been shielded from a political heretic - and from important new data about Oxford.

The attack accuses me of a "penchant for unfounded allegations." Yet the attack itself consists entirely of unfounded allegations: ugly namecalling, coupled with the absurd prediction that my appearance "would do incalculable harm" to the SOS.

Note the extravagant wording: not "might," or "could," but "would", not "some" harm, or "needless" harm, but "incalculable" harm! I've addressed hundreds of groups in my career, none of which has suffered any "harm," "incalculable" or

otherwise, as a result. One of these groups was the SOS itself. So how would the SOS have suffered this time? There is a veiled threat of "publicity" - "unsought," of course. Did this delicate hint make most of the SOS trustees wobble?

The real "harm" to the SOS is done when the group is deprived of a speaker by means of shabby machinations like these. But this attack doesn't even weigh the possibility that I might have had something valuable to say about Oxford. That was apparently not even a consideration! Political motives were everything, and Oxford's cause counted for nothing - except in the hypocritical pretext that my very appearance would do "incalculable harm."

The methods by which this was done were underhanded and disgraceful to the SOS, which can only suffer by tolerating political censorship and internal scheming. The whole purpose of the SOS is, or should be, to vindicate Oxford's claim to authorship. Petty plotting and the introduction of extraneous political motives are bound to compromise this purpose. The members have a right to expect uninhibited discussion of the issue in which they share an interest.

You may recall George Orwell's words, cited by Charlton Ogburn, on the "veiled censorship" of our time: "Anyone who challenges the prevailing orthodoxy finds himself silenced with surprising effectiveness. A genuinely unfashionable opinion is almost never given a fair hearing If liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear It is the liberals who fear liberty and the intellectuals who want to do dirt on the intellect."

The truth is that we live in a peculiarly intolerant age. Shakespeare himself has been accused of every form of bigotry by the Politically Correct bores of Academe. It's doubtful that *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Tempest* could have been published in our time: the author of these plays was clearly "insen-

sitive" to women and minorities! For all their official censorship, the Elizabethans in many ways enjoyed freer speech than we do. And at least their censorship was open. I assumed that the SOS stood for the right to dissent and against any form of suppression. Evidently I was under a misapprehension.

Nevertheless, I want to express my gratitude to the minority of the trustees and to other honorable SOS members who tried to oppose this devious and shameful operation. When one of them declined to join it, he was foully insulted.

The lesson is all too obvious: it's futile to reason with overbearing fanatics, and fatal to capitulate to them. Universities that have caved in to "politically correct" pressures have become a national scandal - and a joke. Why should the SOS allow itself to be dominated by a frenzied minority? It should be led by those who care

about the Society's true purpose and can add to our knowledge of Shakespeare.

As far as I can tell, those who have succeeded in aborting my speech are people of no intellectual or literary distinction whatever. They are better at preventing discussion than at enriching it. One of them, I'm reliably informed, remarked that my political views would be a handy pretext for preventing me from arguing my thesis that Oxford was bisexual!

I realize that many Oxfordians dislike my thesis, but - though it wasn't the subject of my planned speech - there are more ethical ways of dealing with it than backstage silencing tactics.

I recommend open debate; perhaps even open minds. I believe that Oxford's sexual inclinations help explain why he concealed his identity as he did - and why, under the mask of "Shakespeare," he expressed himself as he did. Is this possibility

also to be suppressed? Maybe so: "That truth should be silent I had almost forgot."

Those of you who may be curious about the speech you have been cheated of may obtain the text by writing to The Vere Company, P.O. Box 1383, Vienna, Virginia, 22183-1383.

For your own sake and for the good of the Oxfordian cause, I urge you to tell the trustees what you think of this decision and the tactics that led to it. I, of course, will have nothing more to do with the SOS until the errant trustees learn to practice the tolerance they profess.

Sincerely,

Joseph Sobran

Prince Charles' Views

by Charles Vere

Prince Charles has long been a devoted admirer of Shakespeare. His elder son and ultimate heir to the throne, Prince William, is named for him, while his younger son, Prince Harry, is named for his father's favorite Shakespearean character, Henry V. Last October, a long article appeared by the Prince of Wales in *The Daily Telegraph*, one of London's most reputable broadsheets, as part of the debate on whether Shakespeare should be a compulsory part of the curriculum in British high schools, as has been the case hitherto. Unsurprisingly, the Prince believes that every student at high school level should be exposed to Shakespeare.

What was perhaps most interesting about the article were HRH's personal insights into the nature of Shakespeare's art. In talking about his favorite play, *Henry V*, Charles wrote:

"...each time I have seen or read the play, it has been the humanity of the King that has moved me most." There then followed part of the famous speech on cer-

emony from act IV scene i, which is too long to quote here, but which talks of the monarch's unrelentingly public life. Prince Charles continued: "When I reread this play nearly 20 years after performing in it at school, I found myself wondering in amazement at Shakespeare's insight into the mind of someone born into this kind of position."

Using Shelley's famous line that "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world", Prince Charles pointed to Shakespeare's moral purpose and the spiritual quality of his works. He wrote: "His plays are the direct successors of the mediaeval Mystery plays, which set out to hand on to future generations essential knowledge and experience under the guise of entertainment. Like them, Shakespeare's plays communicate wisdom through the evocation and study of human emotion, thought and behavior.

"Shakespeare holds up the mirror to Nature for us to see ourselves and to experience ourselves, so that we gain in the process a more profound understanding of ourselves and others, appreciating right and wrong, and the laws of emotion and nature which make us behave as we do."

After such heady stuff, the final paragraph of his article brought one back down to earth with a bump. For the first time in

the article, details of the author's life were mentioned: that he was brought up in the gentle Warwickshire countryside, educated at the grammar school in Stratford, and baptized and buried in the local church. Nevertheless, his Royal Highness assured us, Shakespeare's message is a universal, timeless one. "He is not just our poet, but the world's."

To A Rose

E ye of the garden, queen of flowers,
L ove's cup wherein he nectar pours,
I ngender'd first of nectar:
S weet nurse-child of the spring's young hours
A nd beauty's fair character

B est jewel that the earth doth wear,
E ven when the brave young sun draws near
T o her, hot love pretending:
H imself likewise like form doth bear,
A t rising and descending.

R ose of the Queen of Love belov'd:
E ngland's great kings, divinely mov'd,
G ave Roses in their banner:
I t shewed that Beauty's Rose indeed
N ow in this age should them succeed,
A nd reign in more sweet manner.

By Sir John Davies, in his
Hymns to Astraea in Acrostic Verse

Elegy (Continued from page 1)

Peter, calling him 'friendship's rock.' Peter, of course, is from the Greek word for 'rock,' petros."

"Apart from the poem itself, what else has been learned of this Peter?"

"Professor Foster has ascertained that he was twenty-nine at the time of his murder, and had been married three years. He had been a student at Oxford, where he probably met Shakespeare. The professor points out that Shakespeare must have passed through Oxford frequently while travelling between London and Stratford."

"Surely he does not suggest that Shakespeare matriculated at Oxford?"

"Certainly not. Even an American could hardly suppose such a thing."

"I am relieved," Holmes smiled, taking up his violin and sawing casually on it. He was silent for a few minutes. I resumed the attack.

"I must say, Holmes," I glibed, "I have always wondered how you could adhere to the snobbish belief that the real author of Shakespeare's works must have been an earl. The truth is common sense itself. There is no need to posit mystery or conspiracy. Shakespeare was neither an earl, nor Francis Bacon, nor Christopher Marlowe; Shakespeare was Shakespeare. We have the testimony of those who knew the man himself; the scholars are unanimous; and now modern science has confirmed what nobody should have questioned."

"Quite so, Watson. No doubt you are perfectly right."

He continued improvising melodies, allowing me to savor my victory. It was not every day that Sherlock Holmes admitted defeat.

At length he laid the violin down and spoke again.

"You say that young Peter was murdered in January, 1612?"

"Yes," I nodded. "On January 25."

"He was married?"

"For three years."

"Did he have children?"

"None are mentioned"

"And the Elegy was registered for publication shortly after his death?"

"Yes. Nineteen days afterward."

"In Exeter?"

"In London, of course."

"Oh dear," said Holmes, with a faint hint of mock alarm.

"Why not? All Shakespeare's works were published in London."

"And to whom is the poem dedicated?"

"To Peter's brother, John Peter."

"So the poem was presented to him before it was published?"

"I don't know. The newspapers say nothing about that."

"But presumably an elegy about a friend would be presented to the family before it was sent to the publisher, especially if it was dedicated to a member of the family."

"Perhaps. There seems to be no posi-

"Why would a publisher want to rush to the presses with a poem about a man nobody in London had ever heard of?"

tive evidence on the point."

"And where was Shakespeare in 1612? In London?"

"The scholars believe that he had retired to Stratford."

"Ah."

I felt a twinge of uneasiness. "What are you driving at, Holmes? Do you find something amiss? The story seems quite straight forward to me."

"Tell me, Watson, were the trains reliable in Shakespeare's day?"

"There were no trains in Shakespeare's day. Don't be silly."

"But there must have been trains in Shakespeare's day."

"Really, Holmes! What is the point of this absurdity?"

"Absurdity, Watson? I should call it iron logic. We have already established that Shakespeare of Stratford wrote the Elegy. From this it follows, by the simplest deduction, that he must have availed himself of modern means of transportation. How many times must I remind you, Watson," he sighed, "that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?"

I was speechless.

"Young Peter, a gentleman of no

great rank or renown, was killed on the night of January 25 in an obscure village near Exeter, over a hundred and fifty miles from both Stratford and London. Yet within three weeks, several events had occurred. Let us take them in order. The news reached the remote town in Warwickshire where Shakespeare lived. Shakespeare, shocked and grieved, hastily wrote an elegy of some length, which he took or, let us concede, sent to Peter's family. He then sent a second copy of the poem to a publisher in London, some ninety miles from Stratford, who decided to publish it immediately. In order for all this to be achieved, the actors in this little drama must have been moving at extraordinary velocities. It could not have happened without modern vehicles. The alternative is to suppose that Exeter and Stratford were nearer to London in those days."

"The sequence you describe," I said stubbornly, "however improbable, was not physically impossible."

"Even assuming you are right, what would be the hurry?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why would a publisher want to rush to the presses with a poem about a man nobody in London had ever heard of? It was rare for the writers of elegies and the reading public to take an interest in anyone below the rank of knight, as Professor Foster himself admits."

"But the poem was by Shakespeare! He was extremely popular!"

"Then it is all the more extraordinary that the publisher neglected to put his name on the title-page. He was identified only by his initials, 'W.S.' Surely it is remarkable that the title-page should tell us so much about the victim, who was unknown, and so little about the author, who it seems was already celebrated. Why withhold that name which alone could ensure sales?"

As I tried to think of a reply, Holmes went on: "Moreover, this same publisher, Thomas Thorpe, had only recently published Shakespeare's Sonnets, evidently without his permission, thereby exposing the most intimate details of his love life to public view. Such, at any rate, is the account of the scholars by whom you set such store. But I put it to you: Is this piratical scoundrel Thorpe the man Shakespeare

would rush to favor with his next long poem?"

"So you have been following this story! Holmes, you are devious!"

"Forgive me, Watson," he smiled. "I could not resist hearing what you would make of it. You know I value your counsel. And I did not deceive you. I know less about the case than I would wish to."

"Well, what else have you learned?"

"Professor Foster himself acknowledges some of the difficulties in his position. But others have escaped his notice entirely. For example, he admits that there is no evidence that Shakespeare actually met Peter except for the poem itself, such as it is. Yet he fails to see that the author of the poem could have known little or nothing about William Peter."

"Why not?"

"Because poor William Peter was murdered after only three years of marriage, as Professor Foster has found, and apparently died without issue. Yet the poem itself tells us plainly that its subject had been married for nine years and was a devoted father!"

"What do you conclude from that?"

"That the Elegy cannot have been written about William Peter."

"Good heavens!"

Holmes smiled complacently.

"Then Professor Foster has misled the public?"

"He was misled himself, Watson. The sleights of Thomas Thorpe operate across the centuries."

"Perhaps," I suggested desperately, "Shakespeare was merely mistaken on the point of Peter's family life."

"I fear that is impossible, Watson. The poet, it is clear, knew the murdered man very well. We have only Thorpe's word that this man was William Peter of Exeter."

"But none of this disproves Shakespeare's authorship."

"The suspicious circumstances of the Elegy itself create grave doubt as to its authorship, Watson. Thorpe tried to make it appear to be Shakespeare's work without using Shakespeare's name. Why should he be so roundabout? There is our mystery. And there, I confess, I am at a loss for the moment."

"Perhaps there is no solution," I suggested. "As with so many other problems

surrounding Shakespeare, we may be doomed to ignorance."

"Perhaps," Holmes agreed. "But it is still too early to despair. We have, as it happens, a few clues."

"Such as?"

"The name of the murdered man who is the subject of the poem was indeed Peter, or something similar. Whether this was his Christian name or his surname is impossible to tell."

"If he wasn't William Peter, how do you know his name?"

"The poem, as you say, refers to it indirectly. It plays upon the verse in St. Matthew in which our Saviour tells St. Peter that he is the rock upon whom he will build

*"Thorpe tried to make it appear
to be Shakespeare's work without
using Shakespeare's name...
There is our mystery."*

his church. This may also be an indication that the murdered man was of the Church of Rome, since the claims of the papacy are traditionally referred to that verse."

"But if his name was Peter, the fact argues for Professor Foster's thesis."

"Not necessarily, Watson. The evidence I have already cited rules out William Peter of Exeter. Consider the possibility that on the night when he was stabbed to death, the Elegy was already in Thorpe's hands."

"What?!"

"The Elegy was written before the Sonnets — long before. In the Sonnets the poet consistently describes himself as old or aging, with death imminent. In the Elegy he twice speaks of himself as being still in his youth."

"But may he not be speaking figuratively?"

"So Professor Foster contends. He is not convincing, any more than the scholars are convincing in asserting that the author of the Sonnets exaggerates his years. The poet makes it clear in the Elegy that he and his dead friend were contemporaries. He says that in honoring his friend's memory he is only doing what the friend had also pledged to do for him, in the event that he died first. Such a bargain argues against any great disparity in their ages. Further-

more, the style of the Elegy, though very fine, shows that the poet had not yet reached the full mastery of rhyming verse he would achieve in the Sonnets. It is even further from the irregular meter of the late plays."

"Then how do you account for it?"

"Mr. Shakespeare of Stratford is not the author, Watson. The poet refers to himself in the Elegy — a presumptuous gesture in a poem of mourning, unless the author was himself a man of some importance. Moreover, the poet complains of his treatment by his country. He has been traduced and forced to live in some undeserved shame."

"What does that prove?"

"It proves nothing. But it suggests a great deal. It suggests a man of a certain stature and renown with a public reputation to uphold. It suggests a great grievance, a conviction that his name has been abused."

"The Earl of Oxford?"

"Precisely. Oxford was extremely sensitive about his reputation. An early surviving poem of his laments 'the loss of his good name.' His fortunes and respectability declined so sharply that a contemporary, far inferior to him in rank, could later taunt him about his 'decayed reputation.' Bear in mind that the author of the Sonnets frequently bemoans his 'shame,' his 'disgrace in fortune and men's eyes,' and the 'vulgar scandal stamped upon his brow.' There was no known reason for Mr. Shakespeare to feel that his faults, whatever they were, were, so to speak, a matter of public record. But there was every reason for Oxford to feel that way. He had lived licentiously, wasted his immense family fortune, and made many enemies."

"Go on."

"Yet the author of the Elegy still hopes to clear his reputation. The author of the Sonnets has despaired of doing so. He feels he must carry his wounded name to his grave. Everything points to the authorship of one man, and to the priority of the Elegy."

"It seems to make sense," I admitted.

"It is noteworthy that the author of the

(Continued on page 10)

Elegy (Continued from page 9)

Elegy feels free to allude to his own disgrace. I think we may reasonably take it that he was addressing trusted friends, and was not bent on immediate publication. On the contrary. The Elegy was meant for private reading only. It was never meant for the general public."

"Then how did it fall into Thorpe's hands?"

"We may never know. But we do know that the Sonnets and 'A Lover's Complaint' had fallen into his hands, because he published them. I surmise that he acquired these poems and the Elegy at the same time, between Oxford's death in 1604 and the appearance of the Sonnets and the Complaint in 1609."

"But why would he not publish the Elegy with the other poems?"

"Because it would embarrass and outrage Oxford's family. Consider again that though the poet speaks of himself as in his 'youth' in this poem which makes its public debut in 1612, he has spoken mournfully of himself as old and aging in the Sonnets, which can be traced with some confidence to the early 1590s. What does that tell us?"

"As you say, that the Elegy was written before the Sonnets."

"Not only before the Sonnets, but many years before. Surely at least a decade must be allowed. A man does not go overnight from thinking of himself as a hale youth to complaining of age, decrepitude, and imminent death. So profound a change must be gradual."

"I fail to see where you are leading."

"If the Elegy precedes the Sonnets by more than a decade, it must have been written while Mr. Shakespeare was still living in his home town. The scholars have him arriving in London around 1590 or shortly before. They can only conjecture as to the date because of the absence of records, but his wife bore him twins in February 1585. Even if he departed for London immediately after begetting them, without even waiting for their birth, he would have arrived in London no earlier than May 1584. That still leaves less than a decade before the composition of the Sonnets."

"He could have written the Elegy during his youth in Stratford."

Holmes smiled. "I hardly think so. At that point, assuming he was already capable of so polished a poem, he was far too obscure to complain of his ruined reputation. It is also unlikely that while still in Stratford he should have formed a close friendship with a married gentleman some years his senior. Besides, the name of Shakespeare does not appear in print at all until 1593. No, Watson, it is far more reasonable to suppose that Oxford wrote the Elegy; that he wrote it when he was still young but somewhat notorious, probably before 1580, but perhaps shortly afterward. He commenced the Sonnets many years later, during the campaign to persuade the young Earl of Southampton to marry. You will

"I must say, I don't find the Elegy worthy of Shakespeare..."
"...I agree that it is not Oxford's finest work"

recall that the great Lord Burghley exerted all his influence to persuade Southampton to marry his young granddaughter. Burghley was Oxford's father-in-law; the young lady was Oxford's daughter. By then Oxford himself was past forty and his health was beginning to fail. In his letters of the period he describes himself as 'lame' — the very word the author of the Sonnets uses repeatedly of himself. All the pieces fall into place."

"It seems plausible, as far as it goes. But I still don't understand Thorpe's role in the business."

"He had the Elegy, but he could do nothing with it — until he chanced to hear of the murder of another man named Peter in 1612. He then altered the title and dedication of the poem to match what he knew of the new victim, and quickly presented it for sale. This supposition requires us to believe only that he heard of this murder within three weeks of its occurrence, as in fact he did. He was unaware of the discrepancies between this William Peter and the subject of the Elegy; but for his purposes, they hardly mattered. Nobody else in London was likely to know of them either."

"Brilliant, Holmes! Bravo!"

"I must caution you, Watson, that this

is only a hypothesis. But it surmounts the difficulties and impossibilities of Professor Foster's theory."

"But what about Foster's computer?"

"His computer is quite right. It pronounces no judgment as to the identity of the author. It merely indicates that whoever wrote the works we call Shakespeare's probably also wrote the Elegy. Professor Foster assumes this author to be Shakespeare; I have long since concluded that he was the Earl of Oxford."

"I must say, I don't find the Elegy worthy of Shakespeare."

"Worthy of Shakespeare, perhaps," Holmes smiled. "But I agree that it is not Oxford's finest work. Here again," he added seriously, "Professor Foster has gone astray. He thinks the poem is a late work. His theory requires him to believe that Shakespeare wrote it at the end of his career. But it is all too plainly a youthful work. It bears unmistakable mannerisms of the great poet we have erroneously called Shakespeare; all that is missing is greatness itself."

"Is that not an argument against its authenticity?"

"Not at all, Watson. Even genius must have its infancy. The man who wrote the Elegy was still learning to write verse, and learning very well. Had he stopped there, however, he would have been forgotten. There is hardly a memorable line in the poem; whereas in his maturity, he could hardly write a dull phrase. Technically, the Elegy is more than competent. But if we measure it against *Macbeth*, *The Tempest* or even *Venus and Adonis*, it seems insipid stuff."

"Well, Holmes, there must be something in what you say about Oxford after all. I have misjudged you. In any case, Professor Foster's theory is certainly untenable."

"Let us not be too harsh with him, Watson. He has made, however inadvertently, a new addition to the Shakespeare canon. That is far more than most scholars achieve in a lifetime."

I returned to my newspaper, and Holmes put his violin back into its case. Suddenly he turned to me, struck by a new thought.

"Watson," he said, "has it ever occurred to you that Homer must have been a woman?"

Vere (Continued from page 1)

been warmed and inspired by your generosity of spirit as I have made my travels. The fact that I have met so many of you in the flesh, indeed stayed in your houses, makes the task of President a good deal easier and more meaningful. Having spoken with you at length, it also furnishes me with a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Society and the direction in which we ought to be moving as we approach the new millennium. And as Chairman of the De Vere Society and a trustee of the Shakespearean Authorship Trust, I am in close touch with developments on the other side of the Atlantic. Finally, and most importantly, I am an incorruptible optimist!

Many exciting initiatives have been planned for this year; some are already under way, as witness our dynamic new Newsletter; others will take time and patience to develop, such as the detailed marketing and public relations plan we are working on. Another area we plan to invest in is the merchandising arm of the Society, namely the Blue Boar Gift Shop. Thanks to the vision and efforts of Johnny Price and Ralph Bota, the Blue Boar has become a real asset to the Society and a useful source of income, however there is a great deal more that we could do to develop it in the future. As acceptance of de Vere's authorship grows on university campuses, we should be developing a whole new line of Blue Boar merchandise to appeal to students.

This will serve two purposes: it will make being an Oxfordian trendy and it will raise the revolutionary hackles of the student population. After all, there is no reason why students shouldn't initiate their own Oxfordian cells on campus, just as I founded the De Vere Society as a student at Oxford in 1986. For too long we have courted the professors with honeyed terms of courtesy; now's the time to unleash their own students against them, and see Actaeon devoured by his own hounds. After all, this is a battle, not a picnic, and there's a limit to how long one can go on listening to disquisitions on the metatheatricality of immaterial texts. Moreover, it is the media and the publishing industry that we should be courting, because it is they who will assist us in our ultimate goal.

The object of the new Newsletter is to provide members with more real news, and encourage a sense of cohesiveness and common purpose that has perhaps been lacking in previous years. We encourage you all to send in letters, bits of news and other items of interest. It is, however, important to stress that we are not neglecting the longer scholarly articles: these will be published separately in a journal called *The Oxfordian*, which will be published twice a year, and will retail at \$5 an issue.

Thanks to the Herculean efforts of Bill Boyle and Marty Hyatt, we are also expanding our presence on the Internet, and I would encourage all of you to get on line and join the Evermore and Shaksper discussion groups, where you can be in touch with Oxfordians and other Shakespeareans worldwide. Between 30 and 50 people a day are now visiting our Oxfordian website, and it can't be long now before this begins to show in significant increases in membership.

Another priority is fund-raising. Betty Sears has been in charge of the Society's Development Program, which oversees fund-raising, and her dearest wish (which many of us share) is to see the Society acquire its own headquarters and library here in Cambridge, Mass., with a paid staff to man it. We have of course already taken the first step towards professionalizing the Society in providing stipends for their services to both Bill Boyle, who is Editor of the Newsletter, and Marty Hyatt, who co-manages our Oxfordian interests on the Internet with Bill. Eventually, we should look to being able to pay full salaries to a number of people who decide to make the Oxfordian cause their life's work. Only then will we have a chance of accomplishing our most cherished goal: universal recognition of Edward de Vere as the man behind the name Shakespeare.

Underlying all the goals and initiatives outlined above is the key concept of promotion, which means more publicity for the Society and more visibility. To accomplish this requires a new mindset. For unless we as a Society are interested in defining our goals, streamlining our organization and procedures, and refurbishing our image, we can expect to languish for the next 75 years as we remain members of a charming but essentially ineffective group.

History reminds us that Oxfordian groups wax and wane, come and go. Internecine strife is a real danger, and we must be scrupulous in affording our fellow Oxfordians who possess more radical or eccentric views a courteous hearing, most particularly as the strangest things in the Elizabethan Age have an awkward habit of being true. It is essential that we remain a broad church, and keep our sights trained on the real enemy without, not the illusory enemy within. Cooperation is the path to real achievement.

Our greatest ally in the cause is Oxford himself, and it behooves us to promote this charismatic figure as and when we can. There's no reason why he shouldn't be a stellar figure in the public imagination, an instantly recognized name. Yet mention of him still draws a blank in the vast majority of people. Vigorous and well-targeted promotion can, and will, change this, but it will take all of us to do it. Local efforts will lead to national recognition.

If we do have the courage and energy to change and become a Society of greater cohesion and greater vision, then whole new worlds will open up to us. For one, we will find ourselves eligible for serious grant money. Secondly, the task of fund-raising will be made immeasurably more easy as our new, professional image attracts more regular and substantial donations. Thirdly, we will have the funds to commission research and grant scholarships. And, finally, we will in no time build up a respectable membership, which means thousands rather than hundreds.

This brings me to a challenge. I challenge you, the membership, to increase our numbers twofold by the time of the Minneapolis convention on October 10th. All you have to do is provide one of your friends with a gift membership. For \$35 you can ensure that our membership grows from 650 to 1,300 in a matter of months. Or if you can't afford \$35, create a new student or teacher membership for \$15. It's up to each and every one of us to increase our membership and promote the Society as effectively as we can --so let's start right now.

Thank you all for your help and see you in Minneapolis!

A Little More than Kuhn, And Less than Kind

Examining the headlines with
The Structure of Scientific Revolutions in Mind

By Mark Anderson

Oxfordians may have been surprised at the latest Shakespearean stories coming from the national media. Or at least a little embarrassed for the ever-declining state of Stratfordian scholarship. The recently rediscovered 1612 W.S. *Funeral Elegy*, for instance, may read like Cardenio-brand Imitation Shakespeare and appear a closer relative to W.S.'s other printed work (the apocryphal plays *Locrine* (1595), *The True Chronicle Histories of Thomas Lord Cromwell* (1602) and *The Puritaine* (1607)) than to *The Winter's Tale* or *Henry VIII*. But to denizens of Stratford, this is Page One news.

However one feels about the 578-line poem—and some Oxfordians have argued for its canonization, albeit with rather elaborate chronological arguments—investigating why the *Elegy* or last November's *New Yorker* article on *Hamlet* and Martin Luther are considered news can prove just as revealing as analyzing the stories themselves.

Fortunately, a comprehensive study of Stratfordian dogma in the twilight years has already been written. Thomas S. Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) might as well be titled *The Structure of Shakespearean Revolutions* for the author's sagacity in illuminating the history of the authorship controversy. Quite a remarkable feat considering Kuhn never once mentions Shakespeare.

Now 76 years since J. Thomas Looney's *Shakespeare Identified* first came into print, the revolution it set in motion—and the entrenched orthodoxy's reaction to it—share many identifying traits with other intellectual revolutions in history (or what Kuhn terms "paradigm shifts"). Kuhn's consideration of orthodox reactions to John Dalton's atomic theory of chemistry or Nicolaus Copernicus' heliocentric cosmology shows haunting relevance to the authorship debate and its

reverberations in Shakespearean research today.

Consider the 1612 W.S. *Elegy*. Since the Complete Works of W.S. constitute at least four printed texts—three of which remain apocryphal even to the most avid proponents of the *Elegy*—the first question to be broached is an obvious one: Why canonize one and leave three waiting at the doorstep? (It is a question, curiously enough, I have yet to see any article on the *Elegy* ask.)

It certainly is convenient that a canonized *Elegy* would appear *prima facie* to exclude Edward de Vere as the author, since he died in 1604 and the poem pays tribute to an individual who was killed in 1612.

Perhaps part of the reason a seven year-old story (Donald Foster's book *Elegy by W.S.: A Study in Attribution* came out in 1989) now shares front-page column inches in the *New York Times* with Bosnia and the 1996 Presidential Campaign is the *Elegy*'s utility in silencing the increasing number of heretics at the gate.

And that should come as no surprise to Oxfordians. The chronology has been and probably will continue to be the most visible site where the authorship controversy is staged.

The chronology, in fact, is what Kuhn would categorize as a rule. In Kuhn's framework, rules restrict the number of solutions to puzzles encountered in one's day-to-day research. Devise a solution that defies the chronology (*i.e.* the author stopped writing in 1604) and face hostility, censure or excommunication from the Stratfordian priesthood. Follow the rules for your professional advancement; defy the rules at your professional peril.

However, as Kuhn points out, rules are not fundamental to the discipline itself. They are merely guidelines established for

the practitioners to conduct the problem-solving ("mopping-up operations" as he at times more cynically terms it) that constitutes nearly all research in any field.

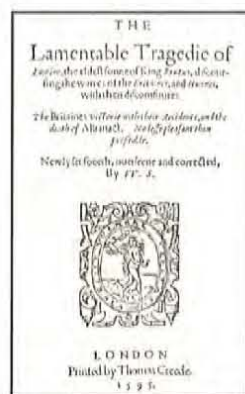
Rather, if rules are the essence of a field, the paradigm is its quintessence. In the Copernican debate, the paradigm at stake involved the Earth's station in the universe. In the present debate, the center of the literary universe is the thing. And who it is means more than just a face to put with a name. More abstractly, a paradigm might be defined, as Kuhn phrased it, as the "constellation of shared commitments" held within a particular field. (p. 181)

Considering scientific history within the context of paradigm shifts, then, Kuhn found common threads throughout the Western tradition. And that's where the W.S. *Elegy* and rules like the chronology come in.

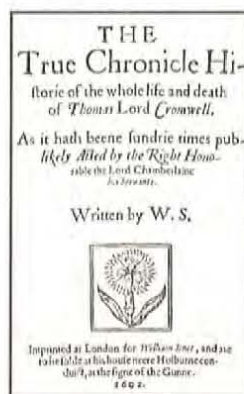
The importance of rules and rule-making, as Kuhn establishes, closely traces a paradigm's approach to a crisis state: "Though almost nonexistent during periods of normal science, [debates over rules] recur regularly just before and during scientific revolutions, the periods when paradigms are first under attack and then subject to change... When scientists disagree about whether the fundamental problems of their field have been solved, the search for rules gains a function that it does not ordinarily possess." (p. 48)

In addition, the prominence of Kuhnian rules like chronology may prove a useful barometer for gauging uncertainty in the Stratfordian camp. As Kuhn concludes, "Rules should therefore become important and the characteristic unconcern about them should vanish whenever paradigms or models are felt to be insecure." (p. 47) Roughly translated, the more caulk you use, the closer you are to needing a whole new tub—and the touchier you are about the whole thing.

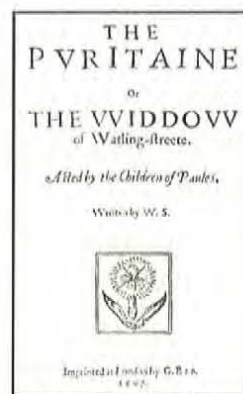
Of course, in the final stages of any theory, the patchwork of stopgap fixes and newfound rules makes quite a grotesquerie for observers outside the dominant paradigm. The Divine William, we are now told, wrote the Divine *Elegy* after he had finished *The Tempest*, his farewell to the stage. Perhaps in the same way in which he wrote *Venus and Adonis* to win friends and influence people, he composed the *Elegy* to establish his credentials at cranking out



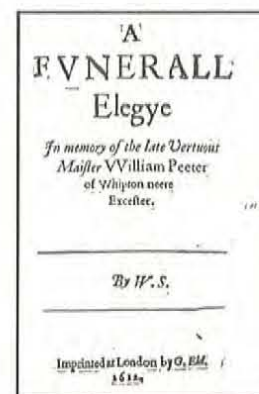
1596 - Locrine



1602 - Thomas, Lord Cromwell



1607 - The Puritaine



1612 - Funeral Elegy

The Complete Works of W.S. : Canonize the Elegy and its three ugly brothers may soon want to move in

stilted, lifeless panegyrics. Or maybe he was just warming up for "Good Friend for Iesus SAKE forbear To digg the dust enclosed HERE..."

Curiously, Copernicus' observations about the mishmash of theories propagated to keep the lumbering Ptolemaic ship afloat ring frighteningly true in the present context:

"It is as though an artist were to gather the hands, feet, head and other members for his images from diverse models, each part excellently drawn, but not related to a single body, and since they in no way match each other, the result would be monster rather than man. [*Is he describing the Droeshout engraving here?* — Ed.] So in the course of their exposition... we find that they have either omitted some indispensable detail or introduced something foreign and wholly irrelevant. This would of a surety not have been so had they followed fixed principles; for if their hypotheses were not misleading, all inferences based thereon might be surely verified." (Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution*, Harvard University Press (1966) p. 138.)

Sratfordians, it seems, have been cribbing like mad from the Ptolemaic prompt book.

When *The New Yorker* published David Remnick's "Hamlet in Hollywood" feature last November 20, the theory it advanced — that the play was an allegorical biography of Martin Luther (cf. *SOS Newsletter*, autumn 1995, p. 3) — certainly gives Copernicus' words new life. In fact,

like an increased dependence on rules and methodology, the preponderance of seemingly arbitrary hypotheses within a paradigm also tends to foreshadow a crisis wherein the entire paradigm comes into question.

And the practitioners within the paradigm are rarely the ones doing the questioning. As Kuhn establishes, "By themselves they cannot and will not falsify [their] theory, for its defenders will do what we have already seen scientists doing when confronted by anomaly. They will devise numerous articulations and *ad hoc* modifications of their theory in order to eliminate any apparent conflict. Many of the relevant modifications and qualifications are, in fact, already in the literature." (p. 78)

As if reading from Kuhn themselves, several *New Yorker* readers wrote in a month later to point out that the "new" theories covered in Remnick's article were also advanced in a 1990 *English Language Notes* article and a 1973 Ph.D. thesis.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the *ad hoc* modifications to a paradigm are their fleeting nature. While they may be vehemently defended during their fifteen minutes of fame, they also tend to be quickly dropped when the next big thing comes along. Kuhn observes, "The scientist in crisis will constantly try to generate speculative theories that, if successful, may disclose the road to a new paradigm and, if unsuccessful, can be surrendered with relative ease." (p. 87)

Unfortunately, the solution is never as

simple as sitting the two sides down at a bargaining table and hashing their differences out. The polemical nature of a debate between competing paradigms is as natural as the dogmatic claims made on both sides. Since a paradigmatic dispute is often about the most fundamental issues in a field, rarely can two parties find much if any common ground.

Citing an example from the debate over what became Dalton's atomic theory of chemistry, Kuhn spells out the inevitable nature of conflict in the paradigm game. "Neither side will grant all the non-empirical assumptions that the other side needs in order to make its case. Like Proust and Berthollet arguing about the composition of chemical compounds, they are bound party to talk through each other. Though each may hope to convert the other to his way of seeing his science and its problems, neither may hope to prove his case. The competition between paradigms is not the sort of battle that can be resolved by proofs." (p. 148)

Attempting to solve the controversy with documentary evidence alone would appear to be folly too, for even in the most seemingly objective of pursuits, analytical "proofs" at times have to take a back seat to more aesthetic judgments. Before or in the early phase of an established paradigm's crisis state, progress is made more through intuition than any pat process. That is, "Something must make at least a few scientists feel that the new proposal is on the right track, and sometimes it

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 5)

tain parallels between Oxford's work and Shakespeare's.

He also made the point that the authorship question was a worthwhile subject for discussion and research, and he believed that Oxfordians had not been treated with sufficient respect by the Establishment. They had, he said, raised a number of important questions.

But what consumed the burden of Kay's attention was the dating of the plays, and this for him was where the Oxfordian case fell down. As an expert on the life and times of King James, Professor Kay was convinced that many of the later plays such as *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Winter's Tale* referred to specific episodes in the life of the first Stuart King.

Vere responded that some of his references were apparently taken from James' journals, and Prof. Kay did concede that James possessed a strong self-dramatizing streak and could well have orchestrated or simply invented episodes in his life to correspond with episodes from the lives of Shakespeare's protagonists.

It's also true that topical allusions could be added when a play was revived for performance at Court. Perhaps James' courtiers indulged his vanity by presenting

him as Hamlet in Court productions.

Vere also challenged Professor Kay on the pre-1590 topical allusions in plays such as *Love's Labour's Lost* as well as the dearth of new quarto publications after 1604, a fact brought into especial focus by references in the first edition of the "Sonnets" which clearly imply that the author was already dead by 1609.

Both speakers paid tribute to each other in their closing statements, and Mr. Kornstein praised the quality and unprejudiced tone of the debate before instructing the jury as to their duties. He asked them to put aside their previous judgments on the issue and vote according to the evidence they had heard that evening. He finished with a quotation from Johnnie Cochran, the infamous defense attorney of the even more infamous Orenthal James Simpson: "If it doesn't fit, you must acquit."

Of the eighty audience members who voted, twenty-two had come in as Oxfordians, forty-four as Stratfordians and fourteen as undecided. The undecideds split 50-50. All those who had come in as Oxfordians remained Oxfordians, while of those who came in as Stratfordians twenty-two voted for Oxford.

A victory was therefore declared for the Oxfordian side.

Anderson (Continued from page 13)

is only personal and inarticulate aesthetic considerations that can do that." (p. 158)

Peering into the crystal ball, then, a revolutionary phase — as the authorship controversy appears to be entering — is typically resolved through patience and a lot of perseverance. As Kuhn concludes:

"supporters' motives may be suspect. Nevertheless, if they are competent, they will improve it, explore its possibilities, and show what it would be like to belong to the community guided by it. And as that goes on, if the paradigm is one destined to win its fight, the number and strength of the persuasive arguments in its favor will increase. More scientists will then be converted, and the exploration of the new paradigm will go on. Gradually the number of experiments, instruments, articles and books based on the paradigm will multiply. Still more men [this was written in 1962, after all], convinced of the new view's fruitfulness, will adopt the new mode of practicing normal science, until at last only a few elderly holdouts remain. And even they, we cannot say, are wrong. Though the historian can always find men... who were unreasonable to resist for as long as they did, he will not find a point at which resistance becomes illogical or unscientific. At most he may wish to say that the man who continues to resist after his whole profession has been converted has *ipso facto* ceased to be a scientist." (p. 159)

Meteors frightening the fixed stars of heaven may forerun the death or fall of kings. But a paradigm's fall, fortunately, appears to be far more prosaic.

Announcing a new publication from the
Shakespeare Oxford Society

The Oxfordian

...a biennial journal devoted to new research
and scholarship on the Shakespeare authorship
question and the life of Edward de Vere.

First issue to be published in fall 1996. Submit full length
papers to: The Oxfordian, 38 Woodward St., Boston, MA 02127
Attention: Stephanie Hughes, editor.
email: shughes@lynx.dac.neu.edu

Visit the
Shakespeare Oxford
Society
on the Internet

Home Page located at:

<http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com>

British actor Sir Derek Jacobi is latest to sign Society petition on authorship

British actor Sir Derek Jacobi has become the latest to sign the petition on the Shakespeare authorship sponsored by the Shakespeare Oxford Society. Jacobi has a long list of Shakespearean credits, including his recent direction of Kenneth Branagh in *Hamlet*.

To date more than 400 writers, lawyers, actors, teachers, students and other lovers of Shakespeare have signed the petition, which asks that the authorship question and the evidence pointing toward Edward de Vere be given serious consideration by the academic establishment. The petition will be presented to the Shakespeare Association of America at their annual conference this April.

Among those who have already signed are :

Verily Anderson, author
Armand Assante, actor
Lydia Bronte, author
Charles Champlin, arts critic (*LA Times*)
Norrie Epstein, author
Sir John Gielgud, actor
Michael Hart, author
Norris Houghton, producer/director, author
Sir Derek Jacobi, actor
Kevin Kelly, drama critic (*Boston Globe*)

Edgar Lansbury, TV producer
Kristen Linklater, author
Felicia Londre, professor
Christopher Lydon, journalist
Louis Marder, professor
Paul Nitze, author and statesman
Louise Robey, actress
The Duke of St. Albans
Hank Whittemore, author
Michael York, actor

A Petition sponsored by the Shakespeare Oxford Society on the matter of the authorship of the works of William Shakespeare.

We, the undersigned, petition the Shakespeare Association of America, in light of ongoing research, to engage actively in a comprehensive, objective and sustained investigation of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon, particularly as it relates to the claim of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Occupation/affiliation: _____

Signature: _____

This form should be xeroxed, signed and and mailed to:

Charles Boyle,
208A Washington St. #9,
Somerville, MA 02143

Shakespeare on the Internet; 1995 a landmark year as discussion group grows and Home Page is opened

The Shakespeare authorship debate is now available to the world's estimated 10 million plus Internet users. Whereas just one year ago anyone who searched the phrases "Edward de Vere", "Earl of Oxford" or "Shakespeare authorship" on the Net's search engines would have come up with a response "Nothing found", they will now find bibliographies, current news and up to two dozen and more different articles on the authorship debate, Edward de Vere, and the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

And many of these millions of Internet users are located at universities throughout the world, both faculty and students. Nearly all the leading Shakespeare scholars are active on it.

Bill Boyle, a library consultant in Somerville, Massachusetts, and Marty

Hyatt, a lecturer at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, took the initiative in 1994, and are now the joint managers and editors of the Oxfordian locations on Internet. They set it all up and now they edit the Oxfordian materials and do the troubleshooting. "A tremendous accomplishment," says Richard Whalen, the Society's President from 1993-1995.

For the uninitiated, it works like this: With a personal computer, a modem and a telephone line, you can sign up for Internet access with a local service provider (such as national powerhouses America Online or Prodigy, or perhaps any of the many smaller providers that can be found throughout the country). Once you've signed up with a provider, you will have your own personal email address, and ac-

cess to the whole Net.

With an email address, you can participate in the Oxfordian discussion group Evermore, or even subscribe to the mainstream Shaksper International Electronic Shakespeare Conference, which while it does not allow discussion of the authorship question, is an interesting forum that includes many of the leading Shakespeare scholars in the world.

Or, you can find your way to the World Wide Web and access the millions of web sites that are being established throughout the world on every topic imaginable. Web sites are a form of electronic publishing that most observers concede is the biggest thing to happen to publishing and information distribution since Gutenberg.

At last count, seventy five Oxfordians

Shakespeare and The Shakespeare Authorship on the Internet

- 1) To join the evermore email conference, sponsored by the Society, just send an email message to:

editors@shakespeare.oxford.lm.com

and in the message area write:
Subscribe evermore first name last name

The evermore conference was established for Oxfordians to talk with other Oxfordians, and is moderated to restrict discussion to Oxfordian issues rather than a debate over the authorship.

- 2) To join the SHAKSPER International Shakespeare Conference, send an email message to:

listserv@ws.BowieState.edu

and in the message area write:
SUB SHAKSPER first name last name

This is a group sponsored by the mainstream academics of the world. Discussion of the Shakespeare authorship question is not allowed.

- 3) The Society's home page can be found at:

<http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com>

- 4) The Ever Reader can be found at:

<http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com/everread.htm>

- 5) The usenet bulletin board on Shakespeare can be found by looking for the following name in the usenet newsgroup area of your internet access provider:

humanities.lit.authors.shakespeare

This is an unmoderated global bulletin board where anything Shakespearean can be discussed, including the authorship.

- 6) The Shakespeare Web can be found at:

<http://www.shakespeare.com>

Once there, look for Queries and Answers, then the Authorship Question.

were on the Oxfordian mailing list Evermore, some regularly, some occasionally. They range from Professor Pat Buckridge in Australia to *Edward de Vere Newsletter* publisher Nina Green in Canada. All have instant communication with each other through the Evermore email conference.

On Evermore Oxfordians have been trading gossip and serious research ideas for the past year. Put a message on Evermore and 75 Oxfordians can look at it, and respond. Recently, Professor Alan Nelson, a Stratfordian at the University of California-Berkeley, shared the results of some of his archival research into Oxford's life. His long messages generated much comment by participants, and his exchanges with Nina Green have been especially interesting and informative. (NOTA BENE: the Evermore list exists for Oxfordians to talk with other Oxfordians; Prof. Nelson was admitted to the list because of his "primary source" research on Oxford; we discourage having the Stratford vs. Oxford debate on Evermore, and the list is moderated to restrict membership to Oxfordians).

Currently about half a dozen messages are posted everyday on Evermore. If you take a vacation, you may find over a hundred messages to read when you get back. Marty Hyatt is the manager and editor.

On the World Wide Web Bill Boyle undertook all the steps necessary to establish a Shakespeare Oxford Society Home Page and along with it a companion online magazine *The Ever Reader*. Both sites were uploaded and announced to the world on September 8th last year.

The Home Page will be the permanent repository of Oxfordian information, directories, bibliographies etc., while *The Ever Reader* will be, like any magazine, current and topical with feature articles and up-to-the-minute news on the authorship debate. The first *Ever Reader* (Fall 1995) contained Justice Stevens' *Shakespeare Canon of Statutory Construction* and Charlton Ogburn's 1992 pamphlet *Shakespeare's Self-Portrait*. The Winter 1996 issue has the two articles on *Funeral Elegy* that appear in this newsletter, along with five other articles, including Len Deming's paper from the 1993 Conference *Invalid Logic and the Slippery Stratfordian*.

A table of contents and hypertext linking make both the Home Page and *Ever*

Reader easy to use and both will be constantly evolving and expanding. Hypertext links also make it easy to go immediately to other Shakespeare locations on the Web, such as MIT's file of the complete works of Shakespeare that can be searched using key words.

As is typical of the internet, the word about these Oxfordian sites continues to spread, and they are now indexed in all the major search engines on the net (such as Yahoo), and also linked to other web sites which involve Shakespeare and Renaissance studies. The result is that anyone searching for Edward de Vere or the Shakespeare authorship can now find plenty of information where just one year ago there

"...the Internet will bring the authorship debate to a wider audience than any of us dreamed possible just a few years ago"

was none.

The latest statistics show anywhere from 50-75 hits a day on the Home Page, which translates into probably 30-55 different people accessing the site and all its Oxfordian information each day. Clearly, the Internet will bring the authorship debate to a wider audience than any of us dreamed possible just a few years ago.

Recently Len Deming, Society Membership Chairman, told us about a new membership application from Thailand which came directly from a Net surfer who had found the Home Page. Several new members to the Society and the Evermore discussion group first found us through the Net, and even remarked how wonderful it was to know that a Society *existed* that was dedicated to the authorship debate!

However, the Home Page and *The Ever Reader* are information sources for readers, not for discussion and debate (or at least not yet—a bulletin board feature may be added to the Home Page).

But there are two places on the net where both Shakespeare and the authorship question can be discussed.

First, there is the new Shakespeare newsgroup proposed and shepherded into existence by Marty Hyatt: humanities.lit.authors.shakespeare. The newsgroup is part of Usenet, the global

Internet bulletin board system. Usenet is the part of the Internet that predates the World Wide Web, way back to the 1980s, and even before, for those with long memories. Discussion groups on Usenet were originally founded for researchers in Academia and government agencies to share information with each other. In the 1990s Usenet has grown into the world's largest bulletin board system.

Marty Hyatt spent six months planning and nurturing the proposal and discussion process that resulted in the favorable vote in August 1995 that is required for a new newsgroup; it is the first on the Internet devoted solely to Shakespeare.

This is a wide-open forum, an unmoderated bulletin board, for discussion of any Shakespearean issue, including authorship, by all comers. No one selects or edits the messages, and there are no controls or membership requirements (as there are with the Oxfordian Evermore and the Stratfordian Shaksper mailing lists). In its first six months authorship has come up several times, with the usual pro and con arguments and some heated exchanges.

The other venue to discuss authorship, located on the World Wide Web, is The Shakespeare Web. It features a bulletin board subdivided into a dozen subject sections. One of these sections is called "The Authorship Question", which has been one of the more active sections since last fall, though all the different sections lag far behind the Student's Questions section, which has notes every day of the week from "plugged in" high school and college students around the world.

Some of the discussion threads under the Authorship Question have lasted a month or so, and again, while some of the debate is familiar and predictable, several participants have acknowledged that they knew little about the issue before they went online, but they are now thinking about it seriously rather than merely ridiculing the idea. And that, as we all know, is progress.

There is much more to say about what has been happening on the Net, and we will be reporting regularly in each issue of the newsletter. Some of the exchanges on different bulletin boards, and on Evermore, are worthy of publishing, and with the author's permission, we will do just that.

W. Boyle

Oxfordian News:

Ruth Loyd Miller honored in Louisiana; Horatio Society founded in San Francisco; Northeast Chapter resumes monthly meetings

California

Society members Randall Sherman and Katherine Chiljan have founded a new organization in **San Francisco** devoted to spreading the word about Edward de Vere and Shakespeare.

The Horatio Society will be devoted to publicizing the authorship issue and especially to reaching the younger generation of students before their Stratfordian mentors corrupt their thinking. Randall Sherman has had extensive experience in public relations, and promises to bring his skills to bear on the authorship issue.

Chiljan has already given several lectures and slide shows in the Bay Area as part of their recently launched publicity campaign, and we are informed that the turnout at each of these lectures has been quite good.

Prof. Alan Nelson of UC Berkeley was in attendance at her December 9th lecture, and was one of the first to ask questions at the conclusion. The professor informed the group that he was writing a biography of Edward de Vere before proceeding to ask his questions, and was heard to remark later that he was "agnostic" on the matter of the authorship. For those on the evermore email discussion group, a few eyebrows may have been raised to hear his position was "agnostic."

In **Los Angeles**, the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable continued its lecture series on the authorship and other related scholarship about the Elizabethan era.

Professor Nelson was first speaker for the 1995-1996 Series. His talk on September 16th was "My Monstrous Adversary Oxford: An Elizabethan Court Scandal"

Other talks so far this season featured Society trustee Sally Mosher on November 11th speaking about "Music for Famous Elizabethans" and performing some of this music on her harpsichord. On January 13th Professor Cyndia Clegg of Pepperdine University spoke on "Press Censorship in the Age of Shakespeare".

Louisiana



Lifetime honorary trustee of the Society Ruth Loyd Miller was honored with induction into the Hall of Distinction by her alma mater Louisiana State University. A full page feature article in the **Jennings Daily News** reported on Miller's honor in the Sept. 10 issue.

"Wife, mother, civic activist, attorney, public servant, lecturer, writer and renowned Shakespearean scholar", the article reported, "her life is a whirlwind of extraordinary accomplishments."

The article also noted that 1969, the year Miller was given a copy of Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn's *This Star of England*, was the turning point of her life. "Our lives have never been the same", she is quoted as saying.

The feature lists much of the research and publishing activities she has undertaken with her husband, Judge Minos Miller, on behalf of the Oxford cause and some of the honors she has received in recognition of her efforts.

Massachusetts

In **Boston**, the Northeast Chapter has revived its monthly meetings after a hiatus of almost two years. Thanks are due to Elliott Stone for his initiative and financial help in finding a meeting place and providing refreshments and postage for mailings.

In the first meeting on October 18th Charles Boyle talked about a new book that we think all Oxfordians should be aware of (he will review it in our next issue). The book is *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England*, and Boyle's talk demonstrated it is chock full of great information and insight about Elizabethan England in the 1590s, the political and religious tur-

moil of that decade, and the key role Shakespeare may have played in writing about it all.

In subsequent talks in Boston Roger Stritmatter provided an update on his research into Edward de Vere's *Geneva Bible*, Betty Sears reprised her Conference paper on the Sonnets, and Len Deming gave a talk based on his paper from the 1993 Conference on the logical fallacies employed by Stratfordians to defend their positions.

Len's paper is now online as part of the winter 1996 *Ever Reader*, which means the whole world can enjoy his insightful and enjoyable catalog of Stratfordian mistakes in logic and reasoning.

On November 5th the first reading of Stephanie Caruana's new play *Spear Shaker* took place in **Cambridge**. The play is a comical look at how Shaksper and Oxford may have met. Last spring Charles Boyle and Charles Vere had entertained guests at the annual Oxford Banquet by reading from the play.

A full production is expected this spring, and the Boston cable access channel has asked to tape it. Stephanie asks that anyone interested in seeing the script or participating (or investing in) this work contact her at 617-524-7221.

Grace Cali of **Shirley MA** has published a book on Paul Tillich, the great theologian. She was his secretary for seven years.

Ms. Cali, a former journalist and active member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, has also written for the society's newsletter. The winter 1994 issue carried her article presenting the evidence for Cuttyhunk in the Elizabeth Islands off Cape Cod as the locale for *The Tempest*.

She is continuing her work on the locale and dating of the play which many Stratfordians persist in linking to Bermuda despite all the evidence to the contrary.

Her new book, *Paul Tillich First Hand: A Memoir of the Harvard Years*, was published by the Exploration Press of the Chicago Theological Seminary.

Minnesota

Minneapolis Conference Chairman George Anderson was in the audience for Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion" broadcast January 27th and wrote one of the audience notes that Keillor reads on the air. What George wrote was: "To Mark: You were right. I agree, the Earl of Oxford wrote Shakespeare. Will see you at the Shakespeare Oxford Conference in Minneapolis in October." What Keillor read on the air was just "Will see you ...etc." Well, nice to have the conference mentioned.

Missouri

In **St. Louis**, Pidge Sexton, a participant in the Teacher's Workshop at the 19th Annual Conference, is concerned that efforts continue in keeping secondary school teachers up to date on the authorship issue.

Pidge asks us to pass on to members her proposal "to compile a teachers' guide to deal with the following plays: *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest*. All are great illustrations of how an author presents the history and politics of his time as well as his own personal feelings and concerns. Examination of the use of allusion and metaphor shows the student how every play can be understood and enjoyed. Each play builds upon its predecessor in bringing the author to life."

All those interested in helping devise lesson plans should get in touch with Pidge. She can provide a basic outline of the plays' principal, interconnecting themes, which will help the student acquire a broad understanding of the Oxfordian approach to Shakespeare: Mildred Sexton, 13154 Greenbough Drive., St. Louis, MO 63146.

North Carolina

Edith Duffy and Felix Vann enjoyed great success in their joint interview with a reporter for the Herald-Sun of **Durham** in November. The newspaper ran a long article on the evidence for Oxford as the true author of the works of Shakespeare, with a photo of the two, in color.

Both society members were quoted liberally. Ms. Duffy, who has lived in Durham for 30 years, outlined the parallels between Oxford's life and Hamlet. Dr. Vann, a retired physician, said he was especially interested in Elizabethan times and the life of the man who really wrote the poems and plays.

The society trustees encourage members to arrange interviews with their local newspapers, which are always looking for interesting feature stories about interesting controversies.

England



Mark Rylance, an anti-Stratfordian who believes Oxford may have had a part in the authorship of the plays, has recently been named the first artistic director of the new Globe Theater in **London**, which will open for business this summer. Rylance will select the plays to be performed, put together a 32-member acting company and oversee productions.

Described as the theatrical establishment's most jealously guarded secret, Rylance has mesmerized stage audiences with his performances in *Hamlet*, *Henry V* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

In an interview with the Associated Press Rylance, 35, said a bit wistfully that in his very public position he hopes to be able to "preserve a certain anonymity." Then, commenting on Shakespeare, he said: "We know so little about him. Whoever wrote Shakespeare's plays, and I'm by no means sure who it was, one thing is certain: he hid his own personality."

Several years ago, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Rylance told Richard Whalen, Society trustee, after a performance of *Hamlet*, "Yes, I have Oxford in mind when I'm playing Hamlet, but the director tells you how the play is to be done."

The Globe promises to be a lively place under Rylance's direction. Writing in *Tatler* magazine in London, Harriet Lane commented: "Rylance is a man in love with the Elizabethan Age; he juggles ideas about its poetry, spirituality and philosophy with the

(Continued on page 24)

John Louthier Reports

Shakespeare on Sesame Street?

... Brief note regarding John Wood's holiday card from Pasadena. John W advised that Johnny Price might phone me with a rundown of happenings at our Greensboro 1995 Annual Membership Meeting. Thanks to the both of you. As Mr. Wood surmised, Mr. Price obliged...

And the New Year's greeting from Carol Sue Lipman includes her change-of-address notification. She's settling in Oregon, not far from Ashland's celebrated Shakespeare festival.

...When you next meet Charles Burford let him bring up any discussion of the mini-crisis connected with his *et famille's* Christmas-New Year visit to France and England — wouldn't guarantee he'd enjoy revisiting the day his visa status needed resuscitation. All of which reminds me to remind you that local colleges and libraries are good prospects for booking Charles. If there is such interest, merely contact his new agent, Forum Associates (202-833-8000)

...Now about Shakespeare and Sesame Street, subjects of an item involving Patrick Stewart, cast member of the recent East Coast production of *The Tempest* and former regular of "Star Trek." A story on CNN-TV news in January reported Mr. Stewart's continuing dedication to his vision of making the Bard fun and interesting for young people. The Shakespearean-cum-Trekkie is convinced that Sesame Street's calculated/casual style of educating is an excellent way to introduce juveniles to Shakespeare. As an example for CNN's camera, Mr. Stewart — distinctively costumed as Hamlet — is shown meditating a six-inch wooden, capital second-letter of the alphabet. He is holding the prop in his left hand and a few inches from his face. While Mr. Stewart's intonation is grand, theatrical, he expertly inserts a playful feeling in delivering his takeoff on the ultra-famous query, "Is it a B, or not a B?"

(Continued on page 24)

Authorship Down Under: Pat Buckridge launches one man publicity campaign in Australia

by Professor Pat Buckridge
Griffith University

The case for Oxford has been getting some fresh exposure in Australia over the last three months. In the first weekend of November I gave a presentation on the 'Shakespeare authorship debate' as the last in a monthly series of public lectures at the State Museum in Brisbane, Queensland. The PR people at Griffith University, where I work, were very cooperative, and did a lot of pre-publicity all around the country, which generated about fifteen radio interviews in the week or so before the event, and half that number after it. There was also some coverage (some of doubtful quality) in the print media.

In the interviews, all of which were about seven minutes maximum, I tried to start out with the size of 'Shake-speare's' vocabulary compared with others'. Some have since raised questions about the validity of this measure, but it's at least an effective attention-grabber, and it's easy to move from that to Shakspeare's lack of formal education, and thence to the kinds of cultural knowledge the plays contain that Shakspeare could never have acquired. I'd then say who Oxford was in a sentence or so, mention the contemporary references to his writing and the possible provenance of the pseudonym (that seemed to be demanded), and try to describe as many life-and-word parallels as the remaining time allowed. The ones that seemed to work best under these constraints were the Canopy sonnet (125), Polonius and Burghley, and the Gadshill 'holdup' from *I Henry IV*.

The lecture attracted 150 people, more than twice as many as for the previous lectures in the series, and the reception was very favorable. I used five color slides (the two of Oxford, and one each of Elizabeth, Southampton and Ann Vavasour), and about that many overhead projections. (The Droeshout engraving is great for comic relief).

I spoke for about an hour, covering all

the points made in the interviews but with different emphases, spending a good twenty minutes or so on whether Shakspeare *did* write the works, and whether he *could have* written them, before moving on (with a burst of gold, courtesy of the Welbeck portrait) to De Vere's life and qualifications.

Here I spent more time, proportionally, on the life-and-work parallels, and the feedback indicated that perhaps I should try to spend even more in future. I talked about *All's Well*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello* and the jealous husband theme generally, in addition to those mentioned above. I also tried to outline a writing scenario for progressive additions to plays in response to changing political events and environments over many years, using *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice* as my examples. This may have been a little ambitious, but it can be done surprisingly simply, I found, and it's a useful way of showing how De Vere *might have* worked as a practical dramatist.

Finally, thanks to John Rollett's generosity, I was able to close with a visual and intellectual 'coup de grace', by presenting his brilliant decrypting of the Dedication to the Sonnets. It had them gasping!

The questions went for a full hour, and could well have gone longer; people were really very interested. It was a non-specialist, largely non-academic audience, but it did include a sprinkling of undergraduates. Many of the questions were simply requests for further information, easily answered.

Some, of course, were about why the people responsible bothered to orchestrate the concealment—a big question, but I had an answer pretty thoroughly prepared in terms of political risks and social proprieties, with no need for theories about Southampton's secret parentage.

Others were seeking a definite scenario for how the switch was managed, when,

and by whom. It's not easy to strike the right balance on this. Do you outline the scenario that seems most likely to you at the time, thereby setting up a free target for the orthodoxy to shoot at? Or do you risk looking defensive by saying there are several possibilities; why should we commit ourselves to any one in particular?

In this instance I erred in the former direction, which was fine because there were no academic Stratfordians there to pounce on me anyway—the one disappointing feature of the event as far as I was concerned. I'm hoping I can flush a few of them out of their burrows later this year or next, by getting myself invited to speak in some of the university English departments around the country.

The other question that came up—it always does—was: Does it really matter? I asked and answered it myself in the lecture, but it was asked again anyway, as it was in nearly every interview I did.

My standard answer was that it matters because it gives the works of Shakespeare a believable human being as their author—but I didn't feel it was quite enough.

One final thing: I am hoping to attend a conference in Sydney organized by the Australian and New Zealand Shakespeare Association in the last week of January. Judging by the program (which includes some eminent scholars, notably R. A. Foakes and Bernice Kliman) it will be a hostile environment for authorship interventions, but my hope would be to get some kind of agreement from the Association to provide space at future conferences either for authorship debate proper or, more usefully perhaps, for literary and dramatic analysis of the works based on non-Stratfordian premises.

There should, at the very least, be some sort of recognition that there is a real issue here.

Book Reviews:

Shakespeare, A Life in Drama
(Norton, 1995) by Stanley Wells

**Shakespeare, the King's Playwright:
Theater in the Stuart Court, 1603-
1613** (Yale, 1995) by Alvin Kernan

Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life
(Simon & Schuster, 1995) by Marjorie Garber

by Richard F. Whalen

Wells sees the same old story

Professor Stanley Wells is one of the half dozen most important scholars of the Shakespeare establishment. He is general editor of the complete works of Shakespeare from Oxford University Press. He has written numerous books and articles on Shakespeare. He is director of the Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham. He appears regularly on television and radio, most recently in an NPR debate with Charles Vere, Lord Burford.

So, what does Professor Wells think these days of the authorship controversy? Appropriately enough, "Who is Shakespeare?" is the first chapter of his latest book, *Shakespeare, a Life in Drama* (Norton, 1995).

Wells's answer: "I do believe that the author was William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon; and I think that attempts to disprove this are usually the result of snobbery—reluctance to believe that works of genius can be produced by a person of relatively humble birth or by one who did not enjoy a university education."

Wells "believes" twice in a single long sentence of belief. Then follows the usual Stratfordian biography. Nothing new. For links between the Stratford man and the works of Shakespeare, Wells relies on just three pieces of contemporary evidence: the bequests to Heminge, Burbage and Condell in the will (but these attest to nothing about him as writer, only as a theater

personage); the Stratford monument inscription (but this is ambiguous and cryptic); and "sweet swan of Avon" in the First Folio (but this too is slight and ambiguous evidence). Wells lists only these three; he does not elaborate. After two semi-biographical chapters the rest of the book provides the usual interpretations of the poems and plays.

Kernan Sees a Sycophant

For Alvin Kernan, Shakespeare was a "patronage playwright" writing to advance his career by satisfying a rich patron, King James. In his new book, *Shakespeare, the King's Playwright: Theater in the Stuart Court, 1603-1613* (Yale, 1995), Kernan concludes that "appropriately for his inferior social background, the poet is deferential, modest about his art, and self-deprecating." This insecure sycophant hardly resembles the Shakespeare that most people find in the poems and plays.

Kernan, a former professor at Yale and Princeton, resorts to the usual Stratfordian device of using snippets of quotes from Shakespeare to support his view. Shakespeare, for example, feels limited in his abilities-- "desiring this man's art and that man's scope". (Does he really believe this?)

Given his premise of Shakespeare as a court-playwright, Kernan comes perilously close to describing Shakespeare as a courtier-playwright. Shakespeare knew, he writes, that King James's court would have "inevitably recognized them (the plays) not only as entertainment but as comments on the political and social concerns of the moment. Even if he had wished to avoid politics, Shakespeare was forced to become a political playwright willy-nilly, by virtue of court performances." How the Stratford man did this is not explained.

Kernan inevitably tells the reader much more about the Stuart court than about Shakespeare. Airy conjecture fills the biographical void. He then must convince himself that "Shakespeare was not an

autobiographical writer, not at least in any simple, direct sense. Anything but. He remains, in fact, the most anonymous of our great writers --we seem to glimpse only the back of his head just as he slips around the corner." Kernan, of course, was following the wrong man. The 230 page book does not mention the right man, Edward de Vere, the 17th earl of Oxford, a courtier perfectly placed to write the political plays that Kernan so admires.

Garber Sees a Bisexual

Professor Marjorie Garber, a lecturer on Shakespeare at Harvard, has been circling around the authorship issue for years in her books and Op Ed articles. Her latest book is *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life* (Simon & Schuster, 1995), and in chapter 22 she identifies Shakespeare as bisexual. The Sonnets, she writes, obviously "describe a bisexual triangle." She makes no comment, however, on the biography of the Stratford man. Nor is there any mention of Oxford's known sexual preferences, although she's well aware that he is the leading candidate for authorship of Shakespeare's works.

Most of the chapter reviews the struggle that Shakespeare scholars have had for centuries decoding the Sonnets and trying to decide if Shakespeare was homosexual. Garber traces the struggle back to Edmund Malone in the late 18th century and finds that it continues today. Nevertheless, she provides good bisexual company for Shakespeare, ranging among men from Julius Caesar to Leonard Bernstein by way of Michelangelo, John Maynard Keynes and Cole Porter.

She doesn't mention Abraham Lincoln, but the New York Times (10/1/95) surveyed professors pondering whether Lincoln was bisexual because he shared a bed for 3 1/2 years with a male friend before he married Mary Ann Todd. Bisexuality, it seems, is no impediment to literary or political achievement.

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From the Editor:

Welcome to the first issue of the Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter. As many of you may have already learned by now, there have been some major changes in the Shakespeare Oxford Society in the last six months. Richard Whalen decided to step down as President, and upon his recommendation, the Board of Trustees unanimously selected Charles Vere as the new Society President.

The Board also, in responding to recommendations from the Publications Committee, approved major changes in how the Society's newsletter is published, with many responsibilities shifting to an editorial board in Boston. The new editorial board met with Morse Johnson in late October, and at the conclusion of this meeting it was agreed by all that the newsletter would be published out of Boston.

We should all join with Charlton Ogburn (see letters page) in saluting Morse for all he has done in editing and publishing the newsletter for 13 years. His tenure spans from the days before publication of Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* into the Information/Internet Age of the 90's. Since the newsletter has played such a key role in keeping the Oxfordian cause before the public all these years, the value of Morse's efforts is, simply, incalculable. There is much important information in these past issues, and an index of all past newsletters will be made available to members later this year.

Our newsletter, as we hope this first issue shows, will be dedicated much more to news of the authorship debate and the people involved in it. A new Society publication, *The Oxfordian*, will appear in Fall 1996, and will be the venue for the lengthier scholarly articles that the old newsletter tried to include in each issue along with news. And there is now the Internet, with the Society's Home Page and the online *Ever Reader* magazine available as outlets for publishing new research and some of the best of past Oxfordian scholarship, selected from SOS newsletters and the other older Oxfordian publications, such as the *Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly*.

There is also one other key concern that we know many of our present Society members have, and which we must address

up front. This is the matter of how we, as Oxfordians, proceed with our campaign to establish Edward de Vere as the true author of the Shakespeare Canon and the role of our publications in this campaign. Just as the divisions between Oxfordians and Stratfordians are quite deep and quite emotional, so there are issues within the Oxfordian movement that are equally deep and equally emotional.

By this, of course, we mean the taboo issues that are called to mind by words such as "conspiracy", or "bisexual/homosexual", or "incest", or finally, the most vexing issue of all, "succession to the throne of England". During the past 75 years of research and writing about the Shakespeare authorship, different commentators have concluded that the authorship situation is bound up in some, or even all, of the above. Such speculation does not sit well with everyone, however, and leads (quite rightly, we believe) to healthy debate over how our efforts should proceed in public.

In future issues we will present some of the history of the Oxford movement, and discuss how we proceed from here, with particular emphasis on how to strike a balance between open-ended debate and responsible public advocacy of the Oxfordian position.

Certainly, it will be the policy of this newsletter neither to proselytize nor to censor any one point of view. These various theories about "the rest of the story" have been on the record for years, and will continue to be. We believe all Oxfordians should unite behind what we *do* agree on, simply that Stratman is not the man, and Edward de Vere is. And as for the differing theories that do exist, who among us is ready to say "I *know* what happened 400 years ago"?

Finally, we encourage all our members to send in material about the Oxford movement as news, and about their own involvement in it. All of us have in common a moment in our lives when we first encountered the Oxford answer to the Shakespeare question, and when each of us moved beyond the cliched responses of ridicule, and came to see the plain, yet incredible truth: Hamlet's the author.

Letters:

To Ms. Florence Sheppard
(Copy supplied to the editor by
Mr. Ogburn)

You may imagine how touched and gratified I was upon reading your review of *This Star of England* by my parents, Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, in the autumn 1995 issue of the newsletter — a stellar issue, surely, and a fitting windup to Morse Johnson's outstanding service as editor of the newsletter, which has left us all deeply in his debt.

I only wish my mother and father could have known that four decades after its initial publication, their book would be hailed as "Still a goldmine of information" of which the reviewer would write that "It was through this book that Shakespeare Oxford emerged into the light as an authentic human personality whom I feel I know as I know other great writers".

Charlton Ogburn, Jr.
Beaufort, SC
December 17, 1995

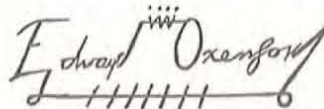
To the Editor:

I agree with Diana Price's analysis of the Crown Signature as far as it goes (Summer 1995 newsletter). The small dotted crown is really a coronet for his title as 17th Earl of Oxford, the seven slashes added to a ten represented by the bottom line of this elaborate, distinctive device.

However, if employed only to tell his personal correspondents what the whole world already knew -- "I'm the 17th Earl of Oxford!" -- I find it all a little sad and fatuous, one-dimensional, obvious, lacking in wit — in a word, unpoetic.

But when I stand back the whole signature looks like one big crown. Then I see a double meaning, a visual pun, and Oxford is Shakespeare again.

Charles Boyle
Somerville, Mass.
January 20, 1996



The Crown Signature

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The newsletter 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 Society as a literary and educational organization.

The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the true author of the Shakespeare works, to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication, and to foster an enhanced appreciation and enjoyment of the poems and plays.

The Society was founded and incorporated in 1957 in the State of New York and was chartered under the membership corporation laws of that state as a non-profit, educational organization.

Dues, grants and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.
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*The following letter was sent to the
New York Times on January 19th.*

Editor
New York Times

William Honan's article on the *Funeral Elegy* for William Peter reminds me of a saying of Disraeli's that those who like this sort of thing will like this sort of thing. What orthodox Shakesperoticians — to borrow an appropriate term from Professor Gary Taylor — like about Foster's *Elegy* is the date 1612. Since the Earl of Oxford died in 1604, the *Elegy* at last supplies them with a chronological blockbuster to put down the Oxfordians. If it were true that the author of the *Elegy* were also the author of "Shakespeare's Sonnets" — the latest of which speak of the author's imminent death in the Spring of 1603 (sonnet 107) — then Professor Foster and his colleagues would be making a material contribution to the authorship controversy.

As it is, Foster's 1983 "discovery" merely suggests that the orthodox post-1604 dating of plays such as *Lear*, *Macbeth* or the *Tempest* is far less secure than might have been supposed. It must be bolstered with new evidence. Furthermore, the rush to confirm Foster's conclusion with the sorts of *ad hoc* reasoning employed by Richard Abrams — or worse still, Thomas Pendleton's astonishing suspension of critical faculties in praising Foster's methodology as "flawless" — amounts more to a criticism of the dubious literary taste and methodological confusion of some scholars than it does to a serious contribution to human knowledge worthy of your readers' consideration. Disraeli's antagonist Alexander Pope, a far better writer than the author of Foster's *Elegy*, and a far more astute critic than most Shakesperoticians, offered some relevant advice in his *Essay on Criticism*:

*A little learning is a dang'rous Thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Peirian Spring;
Where shallow Draughts intoxicate the Brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.*

Roger Stritmatter
Northampton, Mass.
January 19, 1996

Loulther (Continued from page 19)

...Another morsel concerning Hamlet. In the preface to her 1975 second edition of *A Hundredth Sundrie Flowres* Ruth Loyd Miller's page 7 footnote reminds us of just one of the multitudinous, striking parallels in comparing the biographic and artistic evidences of the pen-named "Shakespeare" with those of the 17th Earl of Oxford. "Four highly accredited Shakespearean editors agree that the source from which the author of Hamlet drew inspiration for practically the whole mood and much of the metaphorical treatment of the famous soliloquy 'To be or not to be', was *Candamus Comferte* introduced into England by ...[Lord] Oxford"

Oxfordian News (Continued from page 19)

sort of enthusiasm reserved for superior English teachers or lunatics at the back of the bus."

"As for the practicalities, he seems sure that Globe audiences will put up with the absence of a roof or seat backs, and amused by the idea of them getting into the Elizabethan swing and pelting the stage with cabbages or rotten tomatoes. 'I think that would be quite a lot of fun,' he muses. 'I may have to encourage them by throwing things at them first, just in case they're a bit shy. And that way, we can control what gets thrown back. A pumpkin might be rather unfortunate.'"

Elegy Conference (Continued from page 2)

subsequent marriage to a different woman.

Professor Stephen Booth of UC Berkeley was the final scheduled speaker. He said that he was somewhat surprised to be a speaker, since he had not been involved in previous Shakespeare attribution wars on other works such as "Shall I Fly". Booth indicated that *Funeral Elegy* was a bad poem, and he didn't care who wrote it.

Despite this, at one point he did say that *Elegy* was "probably" by Shakespeare. Booth took issue with the *Times Literary Supplement* article by Stanley Wells in which Wells attempts to discredit the attribution of *Funeral Elegy* to Shakespeare. Regarding Engle's theory that the reference to "nine of years ... in his bed" (lines 511 and 512) refers to a mistress, Booth said he felt the poem's subsequent reference to "The chaste embracements of conjugal love" (line 515) must refer to a legal wife, and therefore Booth rejected Engle's mistress theory.

An additional problem, Booth states, is that *Funeral Elegy's* author refers to his own youth (line 559); however the historical William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon was 48 years old in 1612 when Peter died and *Funeral Elegy* was published. Booth ended by encouraging his listeners "not to push facts around" regarding the poem's quality, but to "live with the di-

lemma that Shakespeare wrote a bad poem."

During the question and answer session which followed the presentation, Ward Elliott rose from the audience and introduced himself as a political scientist and the advisor to the computer project on the Shakespeare authorship at Claremont McKenna College in California. This is the project that received much publicity about 5 years ago with its finding that *none* of the claimants in the authorship debate could possibly be the author. He also commented that Don Foster has been the Claremont project's advisor and mentor, and that they had turned to Foster regarding which of Shakespeare's plays should be considered a "core play" (i.e. one truly by Shakespeare).

However, when Elliott further stated that the Claremont College computer tests indicated that Shakespeare was *not* the author of *Funeral Elegy*, Foster responded that it was necessary to "first get tests that work."

The question and answer session then moved on, and this discrepancy between the computer textual analysis of Prof. Elliott and Prof. Foster was left unresolved.

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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