



# The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

*A Publication of the Shakespeare Oxford Society*

*"Dedicated to Researching and Honoring the True Bard"*



Vol. 43: No. 3

*"Foul whisperings are abroad..." Macbeth 5.1.75*

Summer 2007

## GREETINGS

This newsletter is more of a real newsletter with interesting and informative reports on events and other works, including a Looney letter — no kidding. It also includes a new venture into sonnet research and reporting, and we have some poetry this time. Please note the information for the SOS / SF Conference in October and make last minute plans to attend if you have not done so. I hope educators who teach Shakespeare and/or Oxford will continue to share ideas and experiences through this newsletter. Also, all you scholars, researchers, writers: bring it on. The world is waiting! Please enjoy this newsletter.

Lew Tate, ed.  
tate3211@bellsouth.net

## President's Page

Dear Fellow SOS Members:

There are several important items I want to share with you — including our membership renewals for 2007; our Recruit-A-Member membership recruitment program; the upcoming joint conference in Carmel; the publication of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Anthology; and our new email membership communications program using Constant Contact.

### Renewing Your Membership for 2007!

As all members should know by now, for the past several years SOS memberships have run on a calendar-year basis which means memberships end in December each year and must be renewed again every January. If for some reason you have not yet renewed your membership for 2007, please do so ASAP. You can renew online via the SOS website: [www.shakespeare-oxford.com](http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com). Or you can call the office (914-962-1717) and speak with our office manager (Lora Cossolotto). Or you can email the office at [sosoffice@optonline.net](mailto:sosoffice@optonline.net). Or you can even fax us at 914-245-9713. If you're not sure whether you have renewed your membership, please contact the office ASAP and we'll be happy to double check your membership status for you.

### Doubling Our Membership — Members Recruiting Members

As you know, the Board of Trustees adopted a goal of doubling our mem-

bership this year. We need your help to accomplish this goal. I believe it is attainable ... but only if every current SOS member actively participates. What can you do to help? Simple. Help us recruit a member or two, or five, or ten. Current SOS members make ideal recruiters. If every SOS member recruits just one new member this year (half price for the first year), our membership will double. If current members recruit three or five or ten new members, our membership grows exponentially. A larger membership base means more resources to support research, publications, conferences, and outreach. More members also translate into greater credibility when we reach out to the media and to potential funding sources.

To help current members recruit new members, the Board adopted what we're calling the "Recruit-A-Member" program, which enables a current SOS member to "sponsor" a new member. This sponsorship allows the new member to join SOS for half price for the first year. The program only applies to regular memberships. The program enables current SOS members to offer a first-year discounted membership to their friends, relatives, and other contacts. It's a win-win for everybody. Our hope is these newly recruited members will decide to continue their memberships after the first year. We sent Recruit-A-Member forms out to the membership in a recent mailing. You can also print

*(cont'd on p. 2)*

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The Newsletter welcomes research articles, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. Assignment of copyright is required for publication. The views of contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Shakespeare Oxford Society as a literary and educational organization.

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the form from the SOS website ([http://shakespeare-oxford.com/wp-content/uploads/Recruit\\_a\\_Member\\_Form.pdf](http://shakespeare-oxford.com/wp-content/uploads/Recruit_a_Member_Form.pdf)). Please enter your name on the SOS Member Sponsor line and make multiple copies of this form for distribution to your friends, relatives, and other contacts. **We need your help!**

### Third Annual Joint Conference — Mark Your Calendars for October 4-7, 2007

The Third Annual SOS-SF Annual Conference will be held October 4-7, 2007, in Carmel, California. You can register online by visiting [http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com/?page\\_id=131](http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com/?page_id=131). Attendees will have the opportunity to view two Shakespeare productions -- *Macbeth* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Expected speakers include Roger Stritmatter, Lynne Kositsky, Richard Whalen, Rima Greenhill, Earl Showerman, Ramon Jimenez, Frank Davis, Alex McNeil, Tom Regnier, John Shahan, Katherine Chiljan, Richard Roe, Helen Gordon, Carole Sue Lipman, Lew Tate, John Hamill, Stephanie Hughes, Allegra Kraszneczewicz, Peter Austin-Zacharias, Stephen Moorer, and yours truly. I will be giving a special 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary presentation. Ren Draya will host post-play panel discussions. Don't delay ... Register today!

### Coming Soon! Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Article Anthology

Just a quick heads up to let you know that SOS will be publishing a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary volume later this year consisting of a selection of some of the best articles the society has published in our newsletters and in *The Oxfordian* over the past several decades. All SOS members will receive one free copy of this special publication. It's the

Board's way of saying "Thank You" to all members for your past support and for your continued commitment. We also strongly encourage members to buy additional copies of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication to give away to friends, associates, teachers, and even libraries. You will be receiving more information about the special 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication very soon.

We'll also be using this 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication in our ongoing media, foundation, and general PR outreach program.

### SOS Membership Email Newsletter

In an effort to improve communication with SOS members, we will soon begin issuing periodic email newsletters and email alerts using Constant Contact. If you'd like to sign up for these periodic updates from SOS, please email us your email address to [sosoffice@optonline.net](mailto:sosoffice@optonline.net). We hope all members will join the list so we can keep in regular contact with you.

As always, many thanks for your membership and your continued support.

Very best wishes,  
Matthew Cossolotto  
President

# An Argument for Less Literalism and More Metaphor, Symbolism, and Other Rhetorical Devices in Shakespeare's Sonnets

By Alan Tarica

From my letters to the editor (Fall 2006 & Winter 2007) and a previous article (Spring 2007) citing my work, it might have become clear to some that I have my own theory of Shakespeare's sonnets. My theory is related to the Prince Tudor conjecture in what I think is its simplest form. My theory generally takes a different approach to understanding the sonnets if one can generalize that there is such a thing. Among the key differences are the order, the subjects addressed in individual sonnets, and the expressions of the message. I want to focus on the last of these because, while I feel that my interpretation of the sonnets is correct, I may very well be wrong. I would like to offer others at least what I view as a very powerful element for seeing potential meanings in the sonnets that they likely are not presently seeing.

It is important to recognize the things that represent our current failings in reading and deciphering the sonnets. We as Oxfordians have not come up with what can be regarded as a compelling case for either Oxford's authorship of the sonnets or the sonnets' relationship to his personal life.

A well-visited Oxfordian theory by Hank Whittemore, attempts to find a structure in the sonnets with the notion that there are 100 sonnets embedded inside essentially equal portions on either end. Such a structure could be affirmed for any even number between 100 and 154, and it oddly fails to address the long delay in the publication of the work or how clues to this structure are to be found. It also lacks sub-

stantiation for the premises claimed with respect to either the specific timing of the sonnets as claimed or their meanings as described. It further strikes me as a completely artificial and forced attempt to fit the sonnets to events instead of seeing them as a response to events.

In another theory, Ron Hess, a frequent contributor and very prolific authorship researcher and writer offers a theory positing a very abstract nature for the meaning of the sonnets expressing the wish of elevating the then early and seemingly immature English language. This theory strikes me personally as quite an unsatisfactory explanation for such intimate poetry expressing emotions that are both extremely powerful and frequently sorrowful or which contain such raw anger. And the assertion that the poet avouched for the form of the 1640 sonnets seems rather at its face a lie when so many of the poems contained are not even by Shakespeare. However, I am personally in agreement with the general dating of the sonnets as I date them from around the early 1570s to 1601.

Many other sonnet commenters and theorists find what no doubt at the time would have been considered sexual perversion not to mention strange and unlikely romantic entanglements. I offer that all of these theories are wrong and one of the chief problems with them is largely the inability to understand the real essence of the poetry.

Also startling is the way modern readers, particularly the academics that are most likely to comment on the sonnets,

## Note for Sir John Sheppard

By Julia Altrocchi

*(Of Cambridge University, Lecturer on Shakespeare at the University of California, April, 1952. Poem written during his lecture and given into his hands afterwards.)*

Dear Shepherd of the flock,  
At Cam, it comes as quite a shock  
That you, who render with such splendor  
The great plays, should yet be the defender

Of that petty puppeteer,  
That minor actor, patcher of plays  
And backstage trafficker. Oh, save your praise  
For the true shaker of the pen, the spear.

That student at St. John's, who took degrees  
From Cambridge, Oxford and Gray's Inn, who  
learned his Greek  
From Nowell, Latin from Golding, read both  
with ease,  
And loved them, as his plays bespeak.

Your wisest graduate, your noblest peer,  
Hiding too long behind the Stratford name --  
Spellbinder Sheppard, with your ringing voice,  
give back to fame  
The real Shake-spear -- Edward of Oxenford,  
the poet de Vere!

express that the sonnets frequently do not tie together in terms of the thoughts expressed. Specifically as an example, Katherine Duncan-Jones uses the characterization of “somewhat lame conclusion” to describe how the couplet ends Sonnet 99. Or more generally, in commentary to his editing, Stephen Booth describes the “unstable and randomly dynamic locutions” that the sonnets employ or explains why as he states that even when “knowledge of Renaissance diction and idiom suggests that many of Shakespeare’s locutions must have made his first readers as uneasy as they make modern readers.” But Booth is kind enough to inform us that in his interpretations that “Some of the puns, allusions, suggestions, and implications” he describes are “farfetched.”

These are not isolated comments, and they represent typical remarks about them, and no doubt there are countless other examples I might have cited. My feeling is that the net affect of most commentary is that people frequently can express the idea that while the words of Shakespeare’s sonnets are clearly beautiful, they frequently leave us lacking or confused in terms of their meaning. Perhaps, the fault is not with our beloved writer’s sonnets, but with us. Certainly, this might help explain W. H. Auden’s famous remark on the nonsense written and the energy expended in vain with respect to the sonnets in his introduction to the 1964 Signet Classics edition.

Part of the problem is that we have become too accustomed to the notion of Shakespeare’s sonnets embodying mere generalities and themes and even the possibility that they are mere literary exercises, which even if true still does not explain the sonnets failing in imparting more transparent meaning and emphasis. Hopefully there is still the possibility that readers can be open to a more germane treatment of the sonnets, one that even treats them as critical to the very essence of the poet’s identity.

But I maintain the primary reason for difficulty is the failure to understand that the sonnets are far more metaphorically-based than generally understood. As a simple means of illustrating this point, I offer some of the analysis that Dr. James Brooks did in his article in the Winter 2007 edition of this publication. One of the things Dr. Brooks revealed quite starkly in his table of “Compositorial Misreadings,” is the modern corrections that are often made to the sonnets, *i.e.* from the Riverside 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. One particular item is the substitution of the word “thy” for “their”. This is done 15 times, a surprising number of corrections, and I feel that is frankly quite unlikely to have been needed so frequently and consistently.

The net effect of this frequent substitution is to consistently weaken and undermine the extent to which way the poet expresses his metaphors. For example, the substitution in Sonnet 128 wherein the “thy” which refers to the subjects fingers

does not actually alter the meaning of the poem versus the option of leaving the “their” in to more vividly express that the virginals effectively own the fingers of the subject, while the poet has the lips to himself. However, such seemingly simple metting does detract from Shakespeare’s complete ease of expression in metaphor.

While it clearly strikes some editors as nonsensical that in Sonnet 37 “beauty”, “birth”, “wealth” and “wit” are the objects “entitled in their parts, do crowned sit,” or in 27 and 43 where the “shadow” and “shade” respectively are the objects of the poet’s eyes. Yet I believe these are the intended meanings and his metaphorical imagery is meant to be quite a bit richer than many of us expect. So in Sonnet 43 he is expressing that even in the dead of night he is metaphorically seeing and thus using those same eyes he uses during the day. But in Sonnet 27 the “shadow” is the product of his thoughts; thus, it is of his thought’s possession.

Other times such as in Sonnet 35 the “their” reflects that another subject is the object; in this case the poet is excusing all men (himself included) for their sins which he wants to make clear is of greater forgiveness than they even require.

Even more confusing is that in Sonnet 45 the “their” reflects the messengers returning from his subject but the messengers are aspects of his subject and thus part of him/her. Thus the poet is awaiting news that embodies the subject in a way that reflects the subject’s health.

In Sonnet 46 the replacement is done four times, and hopefully the metaphor is a bit simpler to see, but it requires that the heart have its own metaphorical sight in addition to what the eye has. In the couplet, each shares the other’s gain. In Sonnet 69 again the “their” reflects the “parts” from line 1 much as in Sonnet 37. Or in Sonnet 70, it is likely the slanders that are of worth in their very testament and approval are all the greater if they are kept up.

It is not only from the “their”(s) that Dr. Brooks supposed “compositorial misreading”(s) that might actually be accurate in the 1609 version or instances where metaphor is required. Perhaps, as well, the “or” in line 4 of Sonnet 12 is actually a contrast between Oxford when young with sable curls and his appearance at the time of writing with quite a bit more grey. In Sonnet 25 line 2, it might actually be intended that “worth” is substituted where “fight” would be expected when Oxford had actually been kept from the fight through monarchical refusal to be put into military service. Or even the substitution in Sonnet 34 wherein “cross” is again expected in line 12 but “loss” is what is intended.

Thus, I offer that perhaps the 1609 version is quite possibly more accurate than editors realize. Other things that are worth noting are italicized and capitalized words as well as punctuation. These arguments are really beyond the scope of what I am currently advocating. My larger point however is

that such potential erroneous editing may have the effect of further removing us from the much bigger metaphors. It is these metaphors that form core portions of my theory.

The famous black wires of Sonnet 130, are, to quote the OED, "The metallic lines by which puppets are worked," a metaphor for manipulation as they are what control how the marionette would be manipulated. These wires were actually black, also a clear metaphor for the evil of them, and it is no coincidence that they were attached to the head. This is actually meant to confer mentally the manipulation of their usage, a much richer metaphor for it.

Similarly, the "child of state" usage in Sonnet 124 may actually be an expression of being subservient to the metaphorical "parentage" of state duties, much like the meaning Winston Churchill conveyed when he spoke to the U.S. Congress on December 26, 1941 and stated that, "I am a child of the House of Commons." Though many may also see Shakespeare's usage on more literal grounds, one can certainly argue whether this is or is not intended.

Another key and frequently misunderstood line is from Sonnet 125, line 1: "Were't aught to me I bore the canopy". While the canopy could certainly be born, (that is why it is clever as a metaphor), the canopy was actually a very important symbol of the state. It is the **Canopy of State** in fact, an item likely symbolically more important to the state than Oxford's ceremonial **Sword of State**, which he carried as Great Lord Chamberlain. Thus, possibly the line is supporting the state in some very tangible way. I should also add that the first part is actually an important clue about Oxford because whatever the line is implying, he is also stating that it might be a question of his obligation to have done so, which he contrasts with an indication that he in fact did so pointing out whether or not his obligation reveals the poet's importance in this line (at least in his own estimation); thus, it is a very potential autobiographical linkage to Oxford.

Conversely, we should engage in an examination of the appropriateness of the metaphor. One of the most famous lines used for dating is from Sonnet 107, "The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured." While very frequently understood as a metaphor for death, perhaps it would be a more apt usage to consider what an eclipse actually is: that of a temporary passing into the shadow of another celestial body. This may actually be reference to mere temporary or potential obscuring / upstaging or fleetingness of this drawing of attention away from the "mortal moon" whoever that might have been. And it seems that this might much better explain how the "mortal Moon" "endured" the "eclipse." Conversely, another aspect of this sonnet that frequently seems to be cause for confusion is line 3, "Can yet the lease of my true love control." I suggest this is meant to refer to an expected conveyance for which the subject of the sonnet is possibly rather reluctant to

make. My personal thought is that if this sonnet is understood readers are well on their way to understanding the whole, particularly when they understand how the "eclipse" might have been used in terms of timeliness.

Further, there are many potential metaphors in usage throughout the Sonnets. And there is also potential symbolism. For example, in Sonnet 94, the usage and discussion of the "infection" to which a flower might succumb is potentially a much more meaningful expression than might appear on its face. And for clues about such usage, we might take Shakespeare's larger poetic oeuvre into consideration like his epic narrative "Venus and Adonis." Consider the larger role that frequent flower symbolism may hold by virtue of realizing that there are many other variations of its appearance such as its distillation into perfumes. Also consider the occurrences of "*up-locked treasure*" and multiple usages of "jewels" and "shadows" and plays on the word "sun", or other seemingly already understood roles for symbolism such as, "painted" and "drawn" pictures. Though often seemingly misunderstood, these examples are meant as references to the image provided by a successor.

And it is hardly only metaphor and symbolism that I believe finds usage in the sonnets but other rhetorical devices such as metonymy, which may very well be employed. The usage of the word "beauty" comes to mind for as representational for the association of something that I believe the poet regards most dearly and essentially is the substance of the sonnets, something my theory shares with one of the previously mentioned theories. But it is not alone and I offer that "shadow" and "sun" are also good examples. In light of the usage of "beauty" and "flowers", I would ask readers to consider sonnets 67 and 68. And while it might be hard at present to understand that line 3 of Sonnet 35, "Clouds and eclipses stain both Moon and Sun", is both more pointed in its meaning and a similar variation of the "eclipse" line discussed in sonnet 107 but with an altered message. Unfortunately these other rhetorical devices are more fitting for another discussion perhaps one with more details of my own theory.

This one has drawn to a close. And while my aim in this discussion is somewhat selfishly motivated as I am aware that my theory is not something that is likely to be given much weight without changing quite a bit of perspective in regard to the Sonnets. My hope however is to have offered a plausible means for seeing greater meanings contained in the Sonnets and to offer Oxfordians new opportunities for seeing their real author embodied in them. So while I suspect that it may be unreasonable for readers to give much consideration that the sonnets generally recognized as arguing for the subject to procreate are again potentially a figurative expression and I believe actually make up what I think is much better characterized as a conceit when the sonnets are

seen in there proper order and a continuation of the many metaphors already used. Nevertheless I will leave it as a parting thought and one in which perhaps I might take up in the future, if the opportunity is available.

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Sonnets Discussed with editing limited to modern spellings and corrected spaces

37

As a decrepit father takes delight,  
To see his active child do deeds of youth,  
So I, made lame by Fortunes dearest sight  
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.  
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,  
Or any of these all, or all, or more  
Entitled in their parts, do crowned sit,  
I make my love engrafted to this store:  
So then I am not lame, poor, nor dispis'd,  
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give,  
That I in thy abundance am suffice'd,  
And by a part of all thy glory live:  
    Look what is best, that best I wish in thee,  
    This wish I have, then ten times happy me.

67

Ah wherefore with infection should he liue,  
And with his presence grace impiety,  
That sin by him advantage should atchive,  
And lace it selfe with his societie ?  
Why should false painting immitate his cheek,  
And steale dead seeing of his liuing hew?  
Why should poor beautie indirectly seeke,  
Roses of shaddow,since his Rose is true?  
Why should he liue,now nature banckrout is,  
Beggerd of blood to blush through liuely vaines,  
For she hath no exchecker now but his,  
And proud of many,liues vpon his gaines?  
    O him she stores,to show what welth she had,  
    In daies long since,before these last so bad.

68

Thus is his cheek the map of days out-worne,  
When beauty liv'd and dy'ed as flowers do now,  
Before these bastard signs of faire were borne,  
Or durst inhabit on a living brow:  
Before the golden tresses of the dead,  
The right of sepulchers, were shorn away,  
To live a second life on second head,  
Ere beauties dead fleece made another gay:  
In him those holy antique hours are seen,  
Without all ornament, it self and true,  
Making no summer of an others green,  
Robbing no old to dress his beauty new,  
    And him as for a map doth Nature store,  
    To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

107

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul,  
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,  
Can yet the lease of my true love control,  
Supposed as forfeit to a confin'd doom.  
The mortal Moon hath her eclipse endured,  
And the sad Augurs mock their owne presage,  
Incertenties now crown them-selves assured,  
And peace proclaims Olives of endless age,  
Now with the drops of this most balmy time,  
My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes,  
Since spite of him Ile live in this poor rhyme,  
While he insults ore dull and speechless tribes.  
    And thou in this shalt find thy monument,  
    When tyrants crests and tombs of brass are spent.

124

If my dear love were but the child of state,  
It might for fortunes bastard be unfathered,  
As subject to times love, or to times hate,  
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.  
No it was builded far from accident,  
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls  
Under the blow of thrall'd discontent,  
Whereto th'inviting time our fashion calls:  
It fears not policy that Heritic,  
Which works on leases of short numbered hours,  
But all alone stands hugely politic,  
That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.  
    To this I wimes call the fools of time,  
    Which die for goodness, who have liv'd for crime.

125

Were't ought to me I bore the canopy,  
With my extern the outward honoring,  
Or laid great bases for eternity,  
Which proves more short then waste or ruining?  
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favor  
Lose all, and more by paying too much rent  
For compound sweet; Forgoing simple savor,  
Pitiful thrivers in their gazing spent.  
No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,  
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,  
Which is not mixt with seconds, knows no art,  
But mutual render only me for thee.  
    Hence, thou suborn'd Informer, a true soul  
    When most impeached, stands least in thy control.

69

Those parts of thee that the worlds eye doth view,  
 Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend:  
 All tongues (the voice of souls) giue thee that end,  
 Uttering bare truth, even so as foes Commend.  
 Their outward thus with outward praise is crownd,  
 But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,  
 In other accents doe this praise confound  
 By seeing farther then the eye hath shown.  
 They look into the beauty of thy mind,  
 And that in guess they measure by thy deeds,  
 Then churls their thoughts (although their eies were kind)  
 To thy faire flower ad the rank smell of weeds,  
     But why thy odor matcheth not thy show,  
 The solye is this, that thou doest common grow.

70

That thou are blam'd shall not be thy defect,  
 For slanders mark was euer yet the faire,  
 The ornament of beauty is suspect,  
 A Crow that flies in heavens sweetest ayre.  
 So thou be good, slander doth but approve,  
 Their worth the greater beeing woo'd of time,  
 For Canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,  
 And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.  
 Thou hast past by the ambush of young daies,  
 Either not assayld, or victor beeing charg'd,  
 Yet this thy praise cannot be soe thy praise,  
 To tie up envy ,evermore enlarged,  
     If some suspect of ill maskt not thy show,  
 Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

94

They that have power to hurt, and will do none,  
 That doe not do the thing, they most do show,  
 Who moving others, are themselves as stone,  
 Unmoved, could, and to temptation slow:  
 They rightly do inherit heavens graces,  
 And husband natures riches from expense,  
 They are the Lords and owners of their faces,  
 Others, but stewards of their excellence:  
 The summers flower is to the summer sweet,  
 Though to it self, it only live and die,  
 But if that flower with base infection meet,  
 The basest weed out-braves his dignity:  
     For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds,  
 Lilies that fester, smell far worse then weeds.

128

How oft when thou my music music play'st,  
 Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds  
 With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st,  
 The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,  
 Do I envy those Jacks that nimble leap,  
 To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,  
 Whilst my poor lips which should that harvest reap,  
 At the woods boldness by thee blushing stand.  
 To be so tickled they would change their state,  
 And situation with those dancing chips,  
 Ore whom their fingers walk with gentle gate,  
 Making dead wood more blest then living lips,  
     Since saucy Jacks so happy are in this,  
 Give them their fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

130

My Mistress eyes are nothing like the Sun,  
 Coral is far more red, then her lips red,  
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun:  
 If hares be wires, black wires grow on her head:  
 I have seen Roses damaskt, red and white,  
 But no such Roses see I in her cheeks,  
 And in some perfumes is there more delight,  
 Then in the breath that from my Mistress reeks.  
 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know,  
 That Music hath a fare more pleasing sound:  
 I grant I never saw a goddess go,  
 My Mistress when she walks treads on the ground.  
     And yet by heaven I think my love as rare,  
 As any she belied with false compare.

## OXFORD'S LETTERS

### The Letters of Edward de Vere Seventeenth Earl of Oxford

Read by Sir Derek Jacobi

With quotes from letters by contemporaries  
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Narrative and editing by Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

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## A New Letter by J. T. Looney Brought to Light

By Christopher Paul

In the Foreword and Appendix 5 of her edition of John Thomas Looney's *Shakespeare Identified*, the late great Ruth Loyd Miller included lengthy excerpts from three letters Looney had written to Charles Wisner Barrell (June 6, 1937), Dr. Will D. Howe (June 2, 1938), and Eva Turner Clark (June 10, 1939). Clark also printed the first letter that Looney had written to her dated June 26, 1926, in her book *Axiophilus* published that same year. I am pleased to add to this small corpus a letter hitherto unknown to Oxfordians that Looney wrote to the British economist Joan Violet Robinson on September 3, 1933.<sup>1</sup>

While there is not enough space here to enumerate the many achievements of Robinson (1903-1983), we may rest assured that Looney was not dealing with any intellectual lightweight; she was educated at St. Paul's Girls' School in London and from 1922 at Girton College, Cambridge, where she excelled as Gilchrist scholar. Appointed to an assistant lectureship in economics and politics at Cambridge in 1934, she became a university lecturer in 1937, reader in 1949, professor of economics in 1965, and was a fellow of the British Academy from 1958 to 1971. It is thought that Robinson was passed over for the Nobel Prize owing either to her gender or her personal politics. The product of upper middle-class English dissenters, Robinson's great-grandfather was a well known Christian socialist and her father a central figure in the debates concerning British military manpower of 1918. With regard to her forebears, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes that she "continued the family tradition with distinction, always a rebel with a cause." Further, "Robinson's incisive mind made her a powerful critic; her insight and intuition, whereby she provided logical arguments of great penetration (without the help of modern mathematical techniques), allowed her to make significant contributions across the whole spectrum of economic theory."

The ODNB describes Robinson as a writer of expository, often original articles and books who "played a major role in the three main critical movements in economic theory in the twentieth century." Her contributions, however, "usually arose from criticisms, sometimes hostile, sometimes sympathetic, of the work of others," including her mentor, A.C. Pigou, whose insights and methods she "thoroughly absorbed," but angrily resisted his "ideology and foxiness, fudges, and smokescreens," as she would say. Also described as "skeptical" and "perceptive," Robinson was an innovative theorist whose collected works "have inspired the young as much as they have irritated their orthodox elders." More than any other economist of the twentieth century, Robinson

"became a model for progressive radicals, fearlessly following arguments to conclusions no matter how incompatible they proved to be." It is little wonder then that Robinson and Looney would have been impressed with each other—there is the old adage that great minds think alike. With traits such as these, it comes as no surprise that the Oxfordian theory would have appealed to Robinson.<sup>2</sup>

Publishing a new letter by Looney and revealing Robinson's Oxfordian sympathies are satisfying in and of themselves, but there is another particular element of interest to be gleaned from the matter. As may be gathered from Looney's letter, Robinson had written to him the week before expressing her interest in the Oxfordian theory along with her appreciation of Looney's efforts in bringing the case to light. She had apparently also mentioned a certain premise then being advanced by Percy Allen, possibly enquiring as to Looney's opinion of it.<sup>3</sup> However she may have framed it, Looney referred back to the same in a post script. And it is here where we learn what the founding father of the Oxfordian movement thought about an adjunct movement that was just then getting underway—familiar to most of us now as "Prince Tudor," or the "PT theory."

~\* \* \*~

15 Laburnum Gardens,  
Low Fell.  
Gateshead-on-Tyne.

3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 1933

Dear Mrs. Robinson,

It was most gratifying on my return from holidays last week to receive your letter of Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>.

Such expressions of interest in the Earl of Oxford's claims, & of appreciation of my own efforts in bringing them to light are, I can assure you, no small reward for my labours. Will you please accept my warmest thanks for writing as you have done.

After all, it is the quality rather than the volume of the support that one wins that matters most in a case like this; and from this point of view, I have had little cause for complaint. Although you and your immediate associates may not be identified specially with literary interests, I do not doubt that, working as a group, you would eventually make yourselves felt. It would certainly be a distinct gain if a nucleus for propaganda could be formed in Cambridge having the avowed object of forcing our case upon the attention of the literary authorities there. At any rate something might be done towards exciting the interest of the undergraduates



– which is perhaps the best way of forcing the attention of the professors. The future is certainly with us, and, sooner or later, the authorities will have to succumb.

It is this confidence that has prevented my feeling any bitterness at the course things have taken, though I certainly did think things would have moved more quickly.

It is something, however, that Oxford's advent has practically stopped the flow of competitors for Shakespeare honours, and that the case, as it now stands before the public, lies only as between the Stratford man & Oxford. All the strength of the Stratfordian case consists in its long acceptance; and it is safe to say that, if the plays had come down to us anonymously, no reasonable person would now hesitate to attribute them to the Earl of Oxford.

If, of course, Oxford was the author of the Shakespeare plays the situation reflects no credit upon the intellectual competence of Shakespearean specialists. Naturally they are sensible of this and wish their exposure to be posthumous. This is why we must look most to the rising generation of students. It would be galling to a man whose position in literature rests wholly upon his reputation as a Shakespeare specialist, to have to admit that he had been befooled, that he had missed the significance of the biggest issue that could possibly have arisen in his peculiar domain, and that the most romantic discovery connected therewith had fallen to an entire outsider. These considerations affect in degree all the literature-specialists, who, without being Shakespeare-specialists, should have risen to the occasion. All alike have failed ignominiously upon a vital problem affecting their special province and can only find refuge now in a conspiracy of silence.

I sincerely hope then that you and your friends by persistent action may eventually break down this passive resistance in Cambridge and win for the Earl of Oxford's claims the consideration to which they are entitled.

Again my warmest thanks,

Yours sincerely,  
J. T. Looney

P.S. re. Mr. Percy Allen. His personal loyalty to myself has been so staunch that I do not like to criticise him. I, of course, fully recognise the very great value of G. Rendall's support: by far the most valuable that has, as yet, been given to the cause.

Mr. Allen, on the other hand, with the support of Captain Ward, is now advancing certain views respecting Oxford and Queen Eliz. which appear to me extravagant & improbable, in no way strengthen Oxford's Shakespeare claims, and are likely to bring the whole cause into ridicule.

J.T.L.

~\* \* \*~

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### Notes

- 1 Cambridge University, King's College Archive Centre: The Papers of Professor Joan Violet Robinson: GBR/0272/JVR/7/263. I am grateful for the assistance of King's College Assistant Archivist Elizabeth Ennion.
- 2 In addition to the ODNB entry on Robinson, from which I have culled the foregoing quotations, I draw the reader's attention to informative online biographies of Robinson at <http://cepa.newschoo.edu/het/profiles/robinson.htm> and <http://www.econlib.org/LIBRARY/Enc/bios/Robinson.html>.
- 3 Percy Allen advanced the Prince Tudor theory in 1933 in *Lord Oxford & "Shakespeare": A reply to John Drinkwater* (BL Shelfmark 011761.de.60). Additionally, Allen published a 15-page pamphlet on the theory in 1936, co-authored by Captain B.M. Ward, titled *An Enquiry into the Relations between Lord Oxford as "Shakespeare," Queen Elizabeth and the Fair Youth of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (BL Shelfmark: 11767.c.2). Allen published another article promoting the theory in 1943 titled: "Who Were the Dark Lady and Fair Youth of Shakespeare's Sonnets?"

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## Brian Vickers on the Stratford Monument

By Richard F. Whalen

In a major upset for Stratfordians, Brian Vickers, a leading Shakespeare scholar, has broken ranks and acknowledged that the effigy of a writer in today's Stratford monument is not the original, which depicted a sack holder in the early 1600s.

He is joined in that conclusion by Peter Beal, a scholar of seventeenth century scribal manuscripts at the Institute of English Studies.

Their conclusions came in an extraordinary exchange of half a dozen letters in *The Times Literary Supplement*, culminating in a long article by Vickers last August 18, 2006. Vickers has been a "distinguished senior fellow" at the School of Advanced Study, London University. He is the author of five books on Shakespeare, including *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (2002).

In his article, Vickers credited the Oxfordian Richard Kennedy's online article, "The Woolpack Man." Kennedy argued that the original effigy, as sketched by William Dugdale in 1634, depicted a man grasping a sack of wool, probably John Shakspeare, William's father and a dealer in wool. Vickers reviewed the record of repairs to the monument and concluded that "these well-documented records of recurrent decay and the need for extensive repair work to the monument in 1749, 1814, 1835 and 1861 make it impossible that the present bust is the same one that was in place in the 1620s."

In his letters, Beal recognizes the radical differences between today's effigy and that of 1634 and accepts the au-

thenticity of the Dugdale-Hollar effigy of a sack holder. He calls it "an important early witness to Shakespeare's image" but leaves unanswered the question of how and why it was altered, which Vickers later addressed in his article.

The letters by Beal and Vickers drew responses from Stanley Wells, chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and Jonathan Bate of Warwick University, both outspoken defenders of the Stratford man. Wells said there was no reason to believe that the effigy was changed. Bate argued that Dugdale made material errors in his drawing.

In his article, Vickers concluded: "Without in any way supporting the authorship deniers [the non-Stratfordians], I think that the upholders of orthodoxy are mistaken [in this matter.]" Nevertheless, Vickers has rejected one of the major pieces of evidence Stratfordians cite for their man as Shakespeare—today's Stratford monument showing a writer.

The back-and-forth of the exchange of letters is captured in the opening sentence of one by Vickers: "I'm afraid that Jonathan Bate (Letters, June 23), setting out to correct Peter Beal (Letters, June 16), himself falls into error."

And *The Times Literary Supplement* gave the final word to Vickers with his comprehensive article of August 18, 2006.

*(Editor's Note: For a full analysis of the evidence, see Whalen's "The Stratford Bust, a Monumental Fraud" in The Oxfordian 8 (2005) and Kennedy's on line article, "Woolpack Man.")*

## "Roscius Revisited..." Revisited

Nina Green

*The foregoing was first published by Nina Green on the Oxford internet discussion group Phaeton in response to an article in the Spring SOS Newsletter entitled "The Roscius Annotation Revisited: Epicurean Discovery or Ambiguous Tidbit?" by Dr. Paul Altrocchi and Dr. Alan Nelson. It is printed here with permission. ed.*

I've just read the article by Paul Altrocchi and Alan Nelson ('The Roscius Annotation Revisited') in the latest issue of the *SOS Newsletter* (Spring 2007), and all I can say is that hopefully Oxfordians won't find too many more smoking guns because what they do with them is turn them on themselves and shoot themselves in the foot! Alan Nelson must be feeling very smug about the way he has outmaneuvered Oxfordians over the Roscius annotation, and essentially gotten Oxfordians to admit that it's meaningless in terms of the authorship debate. And worse still, it appears from the footnotes that Paul Altrocchi and Alan Nelson are collaborating on a *further*

publication concerning the Roscius annotation in which they will permanently eliminate it as a smoking gun in favor of the Oxfordian case.

The three examples cited in the article to 'prove' that referring to someone as a 'Roscius' could mean something other than an actor are specious. The first is a translation of lines by Roscius's contemporary, Cicero:

ut in quo quisque excelleret,  
is in suo genere Rosiuc diceretur

The authors translate these lines as:

so that he, in whatever craft he excels,  
is spoken of as a Roscius in his field of endeavour

Exactly. Cicero doesn't say that a brilliant orator, or a skilled carpenter, was spoken of merely as "a Roscius", with

no qualifier. Cicero says that such a person was spoken of as “a Roscius *in his field of endeavour*,” in other words, “That Flaminius is as good a sculptor as Roscius is as an actor,” with the field of endeavour used as a qualifier.

Altrocchi and Nelson’s second example is directly contradicted by the OED. They cite Thomas Pecke’s 1659 collection of poetry entitled *Parnassi Puerperium*, which contains these lines about Ben Jonson:

That Ben, whose head, deserv’d the Roscian bayes,  
Was the first gave the name of works, to playes.

Altrocchi and Nelson are sententiously critical in their article about Oxfordians who haven’t done their homework, and I would respectfully suggest that in this instance it would have behooved Altrocchi and Nelson to have done some basic homework, and to have consulted the Oxford English Dictionary before concluding that the adjective “Roscian” in these lines refers to Ben Jonson as a *playwright*. The OED directly contradicts their claim. Here’s the entry from the OED for the adjective “Roscian”:

Roscian, a.

[f. the name of Quintus Roscius Gallus (62 b.c.), a famous Roman actor.] Characteristic of Roscius as an actor; famous or eminent in respect of acting. 1636 Heywood *Challenge for Beauty Prol.*, Our (once applauded) Rosscian straine In acting such might be reviv’d againe. 1659 T. Pecke *Parnassi Puerp.* 180 That Ben, whose Head deserv’d the Roscian Bayes, Was the first gave the Name of Works, to Playes. 1861 Dickens *Gt. Expect.* xxx, The celebrated provincial amateur of Roscian renown.

The third example is even more specious than the other two. Altrocchi and Nelson point to a 1708 book by John Downes entitled *Roscious Anglicanus: An Historical Review of the Stage*, and write, “This is a history of English plays, actors, and playhouses, the word ‘Roscius’ referring to more than just actors.” For heaven’s sake! It’s merely a catchy title -- *Roscious Anglicanus*, i.e. English Roscius. Is it possible to write a historical review of the English stage (which is what the subtitle of the book states is the book’s declared purpose), and not mention plays? Of course not! Yet because it’s an impossibility to write a history of the English stage without mentioning plays, Altrocchi and Nelson claim that the word “Roscius” in the title refers to playwrights. Utter nonsense!

And that’s it. An Oxfordian smoking gun thrown away in favour of three entirely specious examples, one of them directly contradicted by the OED, which Altrocchi and Nelson obviously did not even bother to consult.

And for good measure, and to underline the point that

Roscious has never been taken by anyone to refer to anything but an actor, here’s the definition of the noun ‘Roscius’ from the OED, with nary a mention *anywhere* in it of “Roscius” referring to anything but an *actor*:

Roscious. Also Roshus, Rossius.

The name of Quintus Roscius Gallus (see Roscian a.), used to designate an actor, usu. one of outstanding ability, success, or fame (now chiefly Hist., with reference to David Garrick). Also fig. 1647 Herrick *Noble Numbers* 74 Thou art that Roscius, and that markt-out man, That must this day act the Tragedian. 1661 Fuller *Worthies* (1662) London 224 Edward Allin..was the Roscius of our age. 1706 *Evelyn Diary* an. 1662 (1955) III. 338 His best [painting] in my opinion is Lacy the famous Rossius or comedian, whom he has painted in three dresses. 1749 W. R. Chetwood *Gen. Hist. of Stage* 155 Mr. George Powel, a reputable Actor, with many Excellencies, gave out that he would perform the Part of Sir John Falstaff in the Manner of that very excellent English Roscius, Mr. Betterton. 1763 *Boswell Jrnl.* 21 Jan. (1950) 163, I was sitting with the great Roscius of the age [sc. Garrick]. 1793 *W. B. Stevens Jrnl.* 13 May (1965) 82 The little Roscius of a Baronet tortures his Crura Podilla into Harlequin Agility. 1804 *Times* 27 Nov. 3/1 The Young Roscius was at Covent-Garden Theatre last night. 1826 Hazlitt in *New Monthly Mag.* Jan. 38 Of our party only two persons present had seen the British Roscius [sc. Garrick]. 1888 Kipling *Soldiers Three* 58 Captain dear,..the gallery have enjoyed the performinces av a Roshus. 1958 C. Oman *David Garrick* xiv. 372 The Garricks set out for home next day... John O’Keefe, the Dublin playwright, saw Roscius for the last time ‘walking very quick (his way)’ up and down the Adelphi terrace. 1973 C. Price *Theatre in Age of Garrick* ii. 6 To the eighteenth century, Garrick was the outstanding actor of modern times, and to call him ‘Roscius’ as was so often done was merely to indicate that in one respect at least England could rival ancient Rome.

Trust me. When the vicar Richard Hunt, who annotated the copy of Camden, called Shaksper of Stratford “our Roscius,” he was referring to him as an *actor*. For 2100 years that has been the association, i.e. Roscius = actor, and all Paul Altrocchi and Alan Nelson’s tortured analysis and sententious comments about Oxfordians not doing their homework can’t alter that basic fact. And what that means -- and why it’s a smoking gun for Oxfordians -- is that the vicar Richard Hunt, who lived virtually next door to Stratford for forty years(!), had never heard of Shaksper the playwright. He only knew of Shaksper the actor. If that doesn’t demolish the Stratfordian case, I don’t know what does.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir:

I have updates to, or comments on, several articles published in the past few years. My article in the Spring 2007 *SOS Newsletter* (14-20), "Searching Under the Lamp-posts for Dating Shakespeare's *Sonnets*," was written over a year ago. Since then I've discovered two more sonnets that I believe can be dated to the early 1580s, and which I plan to address in more detail in the future. The first is #18 (beginning "Shall I compare thee [EUPHUISM] to a Summers day?/ Thou [EUPHUISM] art more louelie and more temperate:/ Rough windes doe shake the darling buds of Maie,/ And Sommers lease hath all too short a date:"). My article in the Fall 2004 *De Vere Society News*, "When Shakespeare 'originated' his *Sonnets*, did they have a 'Euphues' meaning?," grouped this with other sonnets in a circa-1580-86 regime in which Oxford and his circle were celebrating "Euphues" and "Euphuism." Entirely consistent with that, I now argue that #18 was originated precisely in 1583, or the first Spring after the Fall 1582 Catholic shift to the Gregorian Calendar on the continent. It likely had a "too Catholic flavor" to it, thus explaining why it was left out of the precursor to the 1640 *Poems*. I credit Jean Holmes for first bringing the calendar shift to my attention, though it had been noted by Adm. Holland in 1930.

The second new datable sonnet is #101 (93 in 1640, beginning "Oh truant Muse what shall be thy amends,/ For thy neglect of truth in beautie di'd?"). In 1640 it deviated from the 1609 in feminizing 3 of the sonnet's 5 pronouns ("To make her much out-live a gilded tombe:/... To make her seeme long hence, as she shewes now"). I will argue #101 was originated by the Bard himself in essentially the same form used in 1640, with those 3 feminine pronouns addressing the "truant Muse." And he did it for a very good reason. With the feminizations it actually parallels the story line of the Bard's *Twelfth Night* (*TN*), wherein "Duke Orsino" mildly reproached "Viola-Caesario" for failure in her service as his proxy wooer of "Countess Olivia." Thus, for Cotes-Benson to have in 1640 falsely modified 3 pronouns to yield an ingeniously valid Shakespearean plotline seems beyond plausibility; yet, likely pirates Elde-Thorp could have easily botched #101 by ignorantly trying to make all the genders match. It's a matter of complexity of the 1640's ^93 that shows a genius-level intent, inferring almost certainly authorial design. And, as shown in my *The Dark Side of Shakespeare* series (Vol. II, 225-27), sources and early allusions for *TN* allow dating its origination to 1576-81, an appropriate dating for #101 too. Notice that this challenges Hank Whittmore's notion that the 1609 *Sonnets*' order was "all important," doesn't it?

An article by Dr. Jim Brooks appeared in the Winter 2007

*SOS Newsletter* (13-21), comparing the texts of 1609 *Sonnets* and 1640 *Poems*, and I'll also be examining his argument in a future article. Jim makes valuable contributions, showing that careful statistical analysis can lead to intriguing conclusions. Unfortunately, Jim also demonstrated that false premises and misunderstanding the history can lead to misleading analysis strategies and insufficient conclusions. He compared several scenarios, including that both the 1609 and 1640 texts had derived from the same manuscript (MS). But he failed to consider an option that I've been arguing for years (see my Fall 2004 *DVS* article noted earlier) – that Cotes-Benson had set up the 1640 *Poems* from a circa 1589-94 PRINTED precursor that was the principle source for both the likely pirated-suppressed 1609 *Sonnets* and for the wholly authentic 1640 *Poems*. This is the best way to make sense of Benson's 1640 statement that his texts had been set up as "the author then living avouched" (i.e., while Oxford lived). If Benson was right, then once again the 1609 *Sonnets* order should be suspect. As to who set up the 1589-94 printing, I believe it was John Charlewood (JC), who 1577-93 had a strikingly close relationship with Oxford's servant Anthony Munday, and JC's death in early 1593 may explain why the precursor printing project was never published. As any scholar of Elizabethan Stationers can attest (see Robert Brazil's works), JC's business passed to James Roberts, from him to Wm. Jaggard, and from him and his son Isaac to the Cotes brothers, and along with that went the very important monopoly to print playbills. As heir to this chain of the most important Shakespeare-related printers, 1640 *Poems* had complete provenance, whereas 1609 *Sonnet's* provenance is at best suspect.

Dr. Brooks also began on a bad foot with over-dependence on the nonobjective opinions of orthodox authors, including Hyder Rollins. For example, Jim gave repetitive attention to orthodox analysts' unsupported opinions that either Cotes or Benson were "pirates." The reason this is unsupported is because it's absolutely false, and *ALL* the relevant evidence points in the opposite direction. For example, claims that Benson was a minor pirate (in part based on a deceiving short biography of Benson in Plomer's *Dictionaries of Stationers*) can be easily refuted by referring to the *English Short Title Catalog* (*STC*), where dozens of high-prestige projects were published by Benson 1635-66. Plus, Benson had as his apprentice the highly-respected collector-publisher of 16th and 17th century songs, John Playford. By contrast, the 1609 *Sonnets* publisher Thomas Thorpe was suspect, likely restricted from 1615 to 1624 (when Oxford's daughter's brother-in-law was Lord Chamberlain) and prorogued altogether from 1624 to his death after 1635, when he was in a list of paupers. Notably,

in May 27, 1597, Thorpe signed an affidavit admitting that 5 months earlier he'd snuck off to Spain and consorted with the arch-traitor Jesuit Father Persons, who was that year to be named head of the College in Rome, dedicated to overthrowing the Tudor regime.

In contrast, 1640 *Poems* and John Benson were actually very much within the control and intent of powerful members of Oxford's family (e.g., Oxford's son-in-law was Lord Chamberlain 1626-41, with much authority over the publishing industry). Most importantly, 1640 *Poems* was not at all the "piracy" alleged by so many Stratfordians. Its undeniably authentic printer Thomas Cotes and his brother Richard had bought the Shakespeare titles of the Jaggard house in 1627, in a list in the Stationers Register (S.R.) that ended in "&c.," an etcetera meaning there were many more titles than those explicitly listed. Thus, from our modern standpoint the provenance of the titles used in *Poems* should be complete and objectively unchallengeable. This may seem to be just a minor backwater of the larger "Stratfordian Myth," yet our opponents feel strongly that because their candidate was alive in 1609, they MUST make 1609 *Sonnets* "authentic" and 1640 *Poems* "bogus." They feel this so strongly that they're willing to cheat, obfuscate, and hide evidence in order to score their false point. Shouldn't we Oxfordians thwart them in their decades-long nefarious schemes to discredit 1640 *Poems* and Benson, rather than to blithely treat their unsupported fallacious opinions as "facts" in order to support absurdly shaky Oxfordian theories?

For another update, I offer a humble correction. My letter to the Editor in the Fall 2006 *SOS News* about the "Bolebec Crest" was written during the chaos of my family's move to near Atlanta. Since then I've unpacked my copy of *Fairbairn's Crests* (1968 reprint of 1910 ed.) to find that my notes had been misleading. The "Bolbec Crest" DOES date to at least 1860; and the illustration I'd only remembered from my notes (Part II, Plate 8, #11) DOES have that point on the broken lance that may look like the end of a fountain pen. In Part I (61, 92, 98, 172), the crest was linked to the following families: "Bolbeck," "Bolebec," "Bolebeck," "Butt" (of Kent), "Drayner" (Kent), and "Halton" (Essex), and is described as: "a lion sejant [sitting], supporting with his dexter [right] paw a broken lance, all ppr. [proper colors, e.g. a tan or tawny lion]." "Sejant-erect" or "Sejant-rampant" was defined as "sitting on the hind legs with the fore paws raised" (147), which applied to our crest too. I feel this partly vindicates earlier uses of the Bolebec crest (e.g., Ruth Miller's edition of J. T. Looney, Vol. I, 471; or my series Vol. II Frontispiece). Adm. Holland referred to it in the relevant part of his 1923 *Shakespeare Through Oxford Glasses* (119-23). His focus was that since he'd adopted the then-new Oxfordian (what he called "Oxonian") outlook, he'd been surprised by un-

expected obscure facts that each tended to substantiate our outlook, such as:

"Why do 'factotum,' 'shallow water' and 'worm,' words used in Robert Greene's [1592 'Groatsworth of Wit'] tirade, agree with the Earl of Oxford's names and office, and why should the Bolebec crest turn out to be a lion shaking a spear, although it must be admitted that this is not an uncommon crest?"

However, given the listed family names, it's unclear whether one or more of those families were cadets to the Bolebec title. Most likely the crest applied to neither the Bolebec baronage title that the 17th Oxford held, nor to the family names of Vere or De Vere; and Chris Paul was right to urge us to remove the crest from our newsletter's masthead.

After my Spring 2006 article in *SOS Newsletter* about "Oxford's Library," assisted by Alan Tarica, the *Shakespeare Matters Newsletter* reproduced the "iptsubion Edward" signature noted in that article, from a copy of 1550 *Halles Chronicles*, and suggested a way of decoding it. Sadly, their way duplicated use of one "e" three times, and failed to use parts of the "E" figure. So, I suggest that the following would have been more like what Oxford had in mind as a 12 to 15 year old boy already fascinated with abstract ways to present his identity:

Figure M.1: "iptsubion Edward" margin annotation in copy of 1550 2nd Folio *Halles Chronicles* with "E-d-e-V-e-r-e" device packed inside of the "E"

I feel that since this used the diagonal “d-e” only once more in a vertical plane, and it completely consumed the “E,” not leaving anything unused, that it is the best decoding. As I see it, why would young Oxford have taken the time to put together an ingenious symbol and then not used *ALL* of what he’d put into it?

Finally, in the Spring 2007 *SOS Newsletter* (21), Hank Whittemore’s letter to the editor listed his circle’s opinions of C. Paul’s earlier note that in 1599 the notorious Henry Howard had written to Essex that the 3rd Southampton’s estranged mother had complained about her son, saying he owed her “duty, love and reverence according to ‘the law of God’ because he ‘sprang’ from her,” etc. Though none of Hank’s contributors dared claim the Dowager Countess was

a liar, they tried to impugn Howard’s veracity. Yet, Hank’s circle forgets that they’ve put a huge reliance on the veracity of Howard about a claim in 1574-75 to Burghley that Oxford had denied his wife Anne was pregnant with Oxford’s child. As in 1599, the Howard 1574-75 sacred claim has come to us only 3rd hand. Thus, the 1599 gossip should be just as authentic to Hank’s circle as that in 1574-75. Southampton was *NOT* the son of Queen Elizabeth, because we have Howard’s opinion of Southampton’s Mommy’s word for it. *BUT*, given that Mommy was said by her own husband to have been naughty in the 1570s, *Southampton still may have been Oxford’s son*. The moribund Prince Tudor theory is almost certainly dead, but *Daddy Dearest* can now freely thrive!

W. Ron Hess

## Review

*The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare, Complete Works. Edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen. New York: Modern Library, 2007.*

By Richard F. Whalen

The latest fully annotated edition of Shakespeare—the fifth currently in print—aims to hew closely to the First Folio text, an editorial decision of some interest to Shakespeare scholars and other close readers of the plays. It is one of several decisions verging on the eccentric.

Of some interest to Oxfordians are the usual efforts to tie the Shakespeare works more closely to William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon, while dismissing the evidence for the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford as the true author. Those efforts, too, are somewhat eccentric.

Jonathan Bate of Warwick University, the lead editor, has been a vocal defender of the Stratford man and a severe (if often error-prone) critic of Oxford as the author. (See the review of his *Genius of Shakespeare* in the fall 1998 issue.) He wrote the general introduction to the *RSC Shakespeare* and the introductions to most of the plays. Eric Rasmussen of the University of

Nevada edited most of the plays and footnotes.

Since his introduction to the edition is necessarily general, Bate seizes the opportunity to indulge in doubtful and erroneous assertions about the authorship issue for which he offers no support. For example, he says that specific allusions. . .to the names of villages around Stratford-upon-Avon [not so] and to individuals such as Shakespeare’s schoolmate [!] and publisher Richard Field and the local Somerville family [?], *prove* [!] that the author was from Warwickshire. (Emphasis added.) Is this the best he can do for proof? He argues strenuously that the range of knowledge and allusion in the plays matches closely with what [Shakspeare] would have learned in grammar school. That’s debatable, to say the least.

He asserts that stylometric tests conclusively rule out every alternative candidate. He evidently means the Elliott-Valenza computerized tests, but their inputs for Oxford have been shown to be invalid. (See Shahan-Whalen in the 2006 *Oxfordian* journal.)

The dramatist was the Stratford man says Bate because he knew about rural matters: the names of five apples and many flowers, leather working, country

pursuits such as plowing and sowing, and falconry (really an aristocratic sport). As if only a country rustic would know such things.

Bate blames the authorship controversy on conspiracy theorists and a repellent snobbery that the poet-dramatist must have been an aristocrat. These are the usual *ad hominem* arguments against Oxfordians and other non-Stratfordians.

As reasons to rule out an aristocratic author, Bate cites the poor quality of the French [in *Henry V*], the hazy knowledge of European geography and the howlers in the representation of court etiquette. Such arguments reveal a bizarre attempt to dumb down Shakespeare’s works to make them suit the untraveled commoner from Stratford, but Bate offers no evidentiary support for his assertions, and all of these assertions, of course, can be easily refuted.

Like Stephen Greenblatt in *Will in the World*, Bate can’t resist imagining Shakspeare at a court performance of his *Macbeth*. Macbeth had no son and heir, and Bate imagines that Shakspeare, whose only son Hamnet had died years before, was in the royal palace hall when *Macbeth* was being performed. Shaks-

(cont’d on p. 24)

## 17% of Shakespeare Professors See At Least Possibly Good Reason To Question Shakspere as the Bard

By Richard F. Whalen

The Shakespeare authorship question is getting more attention than might be expected among professors who teach Shakespeare, and even some support, according to a *New York Times* survey.

The general impression has been that the eight hundred or so professors who are members of the Shakespeare Association of America reject almost unanimously any doubts about William Shakspere of Stratford as the author of the great plays and poems. The *Times* survey, however, shows that interest in (or concern about) the authorship question in academia may be much broader, although the results are somewhat inconsistent.

A surprising 17 percent of the Shakespeare professors who responded to the survey, "think there is good reason," or "possibly" good reason, to question whether Shakspere wrote Shakespeare.

And a large majority is very much aware of the controversy. Twenty-five percent said they have given "a lot of thought to the controversy," and another 54 percent "have given some thought" to it. That's a total of almost 80 percent—a high level of considered awareness although it's likely that the "thoughts" of most of them would not have been supportive. Only one percent said they've given it no thought.

The authorship question comes up in nearly all their classes: 98 percent said they "mention the authorship question" in their classes. Three-quarters of the professors raise the issue themselves, and another quarter address the issue but only if a student asks about it. It would seem that students ask fairly often.

On the other hand, 82 percent answered "no" to the question, "Do you think there is good reason to question whether William Shakespeare of Stratford is the principal author of the plays and poems in the canon?" The *Times* article, by William Niederkorn, led with that result, calling it "good news for Stratfordians." The short article appeared on page 34 of the Education Life supplement on Sunday, April 22, 2006. Six percent answered "yes" to that question and 11 percent "possibly" for a total of 17 percent. The so-called "margin of error," a controversial concept, was given as plus or minus five percentage points.

Seventeen percent indicates that forty-five of the 265 Shakespeare professors who responded think there is good reason or possibly good reason to question the credentials of the Stratford man. So far as is known at press time, none of the forty-five was among the dozen or more Shakespeare professors attending Oxfordian conferences or publishing in Oxfordian publications.

Still, no survey design is perfect, suggesting caution about the results. For example, while 82 percent think there is no good reason to question the Stratford man's authorship, 93 percent said that in their opinion the question was "a theory without convincing evidence" or "a waste of time and classroom distraction." That is a much higher negative score. (Respondents could only check one opinion as the "best" descriptor, so the scores can be combined.)

One survey question asked "Have you read any of the following writers' works on this subject?" and included on the list of a dozen names, John H. Stotsenburg and A. W. Titherly. Neither is among the most important writers on the subject; it's doubtful that many Oxfordians have even read their works, nor is it clear why the results (3% and 5%) might be significant for anyone. Unaccountably, 23 percent said they had read Delia Bacon's nineteenth-century opus. It is hard to believe that almost one out of four Shakespeare professors has read her work. Perhaps it was a typographical or arithmetic error. A fair number of professors surveyed have read Oxfordian works: 29 percent J. Thomas Looney, 26 percent Charlton Ogburn and 17 percent Mark Anderson. More than a quarter of the respondents said they've read someone else's work, but no names were given in the survey results.

The survey, in April, 2006, identified 556 Shakespeare professors in a random sample of 637 colleges and universities. Fewer than half (265) completed the on-line survey, which inevitably raises questions about where the other 291 stand on the authorship question and whether the respondents' opinions accurately represent those of the total sample, or for that matter, all Shakespeare professors in America. The other 291 professors may have been too busy, not processing their email, or objecting to surveys in general. Or, quite possibly, they may not have wanted anything to do with the authorship question. At press time, the survey results and methodology could be found at [nytimes.com/edlife](http://nytimes.com/edlife).

All opinion polls carry *caveats* and reservations, and expectations will vary; but Oxfordians can probably take some small measure of satisfaction that at least according *The New York Times* survey the Shakespeare authorship question is perhaps gaining more attention in academia than might be expected.

*(Editor's Note: Whalen publishes a twice yearly newsletter to about two hundred professors who have shown in their writings or participation in Oxfordian conferences a "more than passing interest in the authorship question," whatever their opinion of it.)*

## 2007 Conference

The 2007 Third Annual Joint Shakespeare Fellowship/Shakespeare-Oxford Society Conference will be held October 4-7, 2007 in Carmel, California. Attendees will have the opportunity to view two Shakespeare productions by the Pacific Repertory Theater, *Macbeth* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The list of proposed speakers includes Roger Stritmatter, Lynne Kositsky, Richard Whalen, Rima Greenhill, Earl Showerman, Ramon Jimenez, Frank Davis, Alex McNeil, Tom Regnier, John Shahan, Katherine Chiljan, Richard Roe, Helen Gordon, Carole Sue Lipman, Lew Tate, John Hamill, Stephanie Hughes, Allegra Krasznecwicz, Peter Austin-Zacharias, Stephen Moorner, and Matthew Cossolotto. Ren Draya will host post-play panel discussions.

Room accommodations for the Carmel Shakespeare Authorship Conference will be handled by "Inns-by-the-Sea" in Carmel, California. They represent half-a-dozen unique properties within walking distance of all conference activities, featuring a variety of rooms, many with fireplaces, and a daily basket of rolls, fruits, and juices. Due to the weekend-resort nature of the town, there are two rate tiers: Thursday and Sunday nights range from \$129-\$152 per night; Friday and Saturday nights range from \$143-\$169 per night. Rooms range from standard double to king with fireplaces (rooms with fireplaces are approximately 10\$ more per night). For conference reservations, call toll free 1-800-433-4732 and ask for Dinette or "central reservations" and be sure to ask for the "Shakespeare Authorship" rates for Oct 4-7, 2007. A limited number of rooms will be held until Sept 4, 2007, after which these rooms and rates are no longer guaranteed.

Attention poets and lovers of poetry: The conference coincides with the annual Robinson Jeffers weekend.

Those wishing to present a paper at the conference should send a title and abstract to either [John Hamill, Shakespeare Oxford Society](#) or [Bonner Miller Cutting, Shakespeare Fellowship](#). Papers pertaining to *Macbeth* and/or *Midsummer Night's Dream* are particularly welcome.

### Tentative Agenda

<b>Oct 4</b>		
Thursday reception	12-1 pm	Golden Bough
Thursday papers	1pm-5pm	Golden Bough
Thursday night	Free time	About town
<b>Oct 5</b>		
Friday papers	9am-12pm	Golden Bough
Friday Lunch	12-1:30pm	La Playa Hotel
Friday Papers	2:00pm-5pm	Golden Bough
Friday night	Free time	About Town
<b>Oct 6</b>		
Saturday papers	9am-12pm	Golden Bough
Saturday Lunch	12-1:30pm	Golden Bough
Sat. Mat.: <i>Macbeth</i>	2pm-3:45pm	Circle Theatre
Saturday papers	4pm-6pm	Golden Bough
Sat. Picnic Dinner	6:30pm-7:30pm	Forest Theater
Sat. Play: <i>Midsummer</i>	7:30-10pm	Forest Theatre
<b>Oct 7</b>		
Sunday Papers	9am-12noon	Golden Bough
Sunday Awards Luncheon	12-1:30pm	La Playa Hotel

## The Ghost of Edward de Vere Speaks

By Julia Altrocchi

Would that I could shake my spears  
Against the jeers,  
The old Stratfordian fears  
That still  
Believe in Will;  
The old banality,  
The hoax,  
That cloaks  
Reality,

The great truth that all the skill  
And the swan's quill  
Are mine, are Vere's!

My ghost wanders, astonished, curious,  
Amused, yet furious,  
To find that, after all these years,  
So many still believe  
I'm spurious!



# Is there a Shakespeare Authorship Issue?

(Not if there's "no room for doubt" about the Stratford man.)

By John Shahan

## What we are up against

Stratfordians appear to be pursuing a deliberate strategy to suppress the authorship issue. First, they claim that there is "no room for doubt" about the traditional attribution of the works to the Stratford man. Then, they conclude that because there is no room for doubt, there must be some other reason why authorship doubters continue to promulgate heresy. They launch into *ad hominem* attacks, alleging that authorship doubters are all defective, either in our mental capabilities (intelligence, rationality, sanity, etc.), or in our character, e.g., that we're all class snobs who cannot accept that a commoner could be a great writer.

This strategy serves them well. The authorship issue has been effectively de-legitimized and stigmatized. In much of academia, it has become a taboo subject. If there is no room for doubt about Will Shakspeare, then considering alternatives is inherently irrational, and authorship doubters of all persuasions can be summarily dismissed. Rather than deal with contrary evidence, they can intimidate and marginalize authorship doubters with ridicule. This is not to say that there is some sort of "conspiracy" among them to conceal the truth. The great majority of orthodox scholars are probably totally sincere in their stated beliefs.

Nor should we assume that English professors are monolithic in their views of the issue. Earlier this year, *New York Times* culture desk editor William Niederkorn instigated an online survey of English professors at U.S. colleges and universities sampled randomly and found that 82% felt there was no good reason to question the traditional attribution. While clearly one-sided, 82% is a far cry from the 99% that many would have predicted. More importantly, however, the major institutions – those with the power and authority, to which the media turn for expert commentary – are solidly, and adamantly, against us.

A recent example is the article, "There's No Doubt It's Will," by Professor Stanley Wells, chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, in the Outlook section of the *Washington Post* on March 18, 2007, opposite an article on the authorship issue by Roger Stritmatter. "The nonsense started around 1785," Wells began, "the year a Warwickshire clergyman fantasized that William Shakespeare . . . was not the author of the works . . . (and) laid the foundations of the authorship question . . . , an immense monument to human folly." Stritmatter wrote an excellent article, but it's hard to make much headway when

one isn't allowed to get a clear message out without it being ridiculed by some orthodox authority.

Wells's SBT website describes the authorship issue as "a psychological aberration of considerable interest. Endorsement of it in favour of aristocratic candidates may be ascribed to snobbery - reluctance to believe that works of genius could emanate from a man of relatively humble origin . . . Other causes include ignorance; poor sense of logic; refusal, willful or otherwise, to accept evidence; folly; the desire for publicity; and even certifiable madness (as in the sad case of Delia Bacon . . .)" Reading this, one might well wonder whether Dr. Wells took his degree in English literature, or abnormal psychology.

Another example is the reaction of Harvard English Professor Stephen Greenblatt, author of *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*, (Norton, 2004) to an article in the *New York Times* on August 30, 2005, in which Reporter William Niederkorn asked rhetorically, "What if authorship studies were made part of the standard Shakespeare curriculum?" In a letter to the editor of *The Times*, Greenblatt responded as follows:

"The idea that Shakespeare's authorship of his plays and poems is a matter of conjecture, and the idea that the 'authorship controversy' be taught in the classroom, are the exact equivalent of current arguments that 'intelligent design' be taught alongside evolution. In both cases an overwhelming scholarly consensus, based on a serious assessment of hard evidence, is challenged by passionately held fantasies whose adherents demand equal time. The demand seems harmless enough until one reflects on its implications. Should claims that the Holocaust did not occur also be made part of the standard curriculum?"

Wow! Intelligent design! Holocaust denial! In the face of such threats to our civilization, is it any wonder the guardians of orthodoxy would haul out their Harvard heavy artillery? You cannot be too cautious about what reporters get to say in the pages of the *NY Times*. Interestingly, however, in an article that appeared in *Harvard Magazine* almost a year earlier, based on an interview with Greenblatt, Jonathan Shaw quoted him as saying:

" . . . the process of writing (*Will in the World*) . . . has made me respect that preposterous fantasy, if I may say so, rather more than when I began . . . because I have now taken several years of hard work and 40 years of serious academic train-

ing to grapple with the difficulty of making the connections meaningful and compelling between the life of this writer and the works that he produced.”

So Greenblatt found it “difficult” to make “meaningful connections” between the writer and the works! This is the reason why so many outstanding people have expressed doubt. It has nothing to do with doubters’ alleged psychological defects and character problems. But it is one thing to commit an act of candor in an interview with the editor of *Harvard Magazine*, and quite another to tolerate the idea of teaching such heresies in classrooms. So Greenblatt later reverted to the time-honored orthodox tactic of smearing the heretics.

As the reference to “heresy” implies, the orthodox have turned the authorship issue into an ideological, or even a quasi-religious issue, rather than just a historical-empirical one. They are aided in this by the volume, complexity and ambiguity of the evidence, which makes obfuscation and suppression easy. But people also identify with the myth of the common man, born in obscurity, who, with God-given genius, rose to achieve greatness. They like to believe this God-given talent could have been granted to anyone, even them.

Stratfordians are aware of this, and they promulgate it, as Ralph Waldo Emerson noted. Their tour guides speak reverently of their deity’s “Birth Room” as the “Holy of Holies.” This quasi-religious “cult of the common man”

helps underpin the charge that authorship doubters are class snobs who cannot accept that a commoner could become a great writer. Ideologically committed to the Stratford man, people see doubters as “anti-Shakespeare.” Admitting doubt would threaten deeply-held beliefs. It’s much easier to view us as snobs.

Another sense in which Stratfordianism resembles a quasi-religious cult is in its reliance on a single revered text, treated as infallible despite being in conflict with other evidence. The Stratfordian case depends almost entirely on the prefatory material in the First Folio. Without it, they would be hard pressed to make a convincing case for the Stratford man. In this they resemble other fundamentalists, committed to a sacred text treated as gospel. It is understandable that if one thinks the Bible, or the Koran, is the literal word of God, one might regard it as infallible; but the First Folio infallible as the word of Ben Jonson?

It is ironic that those who defend such views wear the mantle of academic respectability, while anyone who raises questions, based on evidence, is labeled a “conspiracy theorist.” It’s a cheap shot. Those who regard the Bible as mythology aren’t ridiculed in academia. Stratfordians view themselves as the defenders of rigorous academic standards, but they are no such thing. Rather, they are defenders of orthodoxy, and enforcers of conformity. Rather than “Stratfordians,” they

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might more aptly be called First Folio Fundamentalists. The label would at least convey an element of truth about them, unlike their labels for us.

Non-Stratfordians should have no illusions about the difficulty of the task we undertake in trying to overturn such a well-established tradition and replace it with something else. Short of a smoking gun discovery, providing incontrovertible documentary evidence that the works were written by someone else, the orthodox will continue to ridicule the notion. They have much to lose, and little to gain by seriously considering alternative candidates. Besides, the strategy of ridiculing authorship doubters, while repeating their mantra that there's "no room for doubt" about the Stratford man, works well for them. Why change?

### Anti-Strat Strategy

Most, but not all, authorship organizations are organized around strategies that emphasize researching and advocating an alternative candidate, and it is quite natural that they do so. We want to find out what happened, and be able to present a good case for our candidate. But without smoking gun evidence, efforts to achieve a breakthrough by promoting some other candidate are unlikely to succeed as long as the issue itself is treated as illegitimate. Other candidates are targets for Strats to attack, keeping us divided and on the defensive. We need a strategy that puts *us* on offense, and that puts Stratfordians on the defensive.

Charlton Ogburn, Jr., commenting on the writing of books promoting other candidates, said, "You can't get anywhere with Oxford unless you first dispose of the Stratford man." This same idea that applies to book-writing strategies also applies to our overall strategy. Some Oxfordians think that focusing on the case against Shakspeare is "a step backward," but that's only true for us heretics who already know it wasn't Shakspeare, not the public. As far as they are concerned, there is no authorship issue: Shakespeare was Shakespeare.

Oxford is the answer to a question people are not asking. First, we must get them to ask. Educating the public requires a two-step strategy: first, raise doubts about Mr. Shakspeare, then get people to ask who "Shakespeare" really was, and demand an answer of scholars. Until doubt is raised, advocating any alternative is like advocating a new monarch while the old one is on the throne. People naturally defend sitting monarchs against pretenders. It's a lot easier to promote a new monarch if the throne is vacant. It is a two-step process

Diana Price did us an enormous service when she published *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography: New Evidence of an Authorship Problem* (Greenwood Press, 2001). She put the focus squarely on the documentary record, and pointed out that the life Mr. Shakspeare lived was that of a successful businessman, theatre entrepreneur and minor actor, *but not a*

*dramatist*. She also debunked the orthodox claim that there is nothing unusual about the lack of documentary evidence for Shakspeare's literary career. He is unique in that regard. So we now have a book that provides a comprehensive, scholarly presentation of the case against Shakspeare that we can point to for anyone who is interested in that level of detail.

Most people, however, are *not* interested in the level of detail in *Unorthodox Biography*, and also unwilling to doubt academic authorities who tell them that the book is nonsense. Orthodox scholars have power to suppress heretical authorship books because they write most of the book reviews, and nearly all of the major ones that receive the most attention. Something else is needed – something that takes up the idea of focusing on the weakness of the case for the Stratford man, but that makes it more accessible to a general audience, and that bypasses orthodox authorities and focuses on highly credible authorship skeptics.

### The Declaration Strategy

The threshold question in the authorship debate is whether there's any legitimate issue at all. The answer depends on whether there is any room for doubt about the Stratford man. The orthodox have convinced the public that there's no doubt, and so no legitimate issue. Oxfordians' initial goal should be to *legitimize* the authorship issue, not solve it outright; and to legitimize it, we need to focus attention on the weakness of the case for Shakspeare.

That's the purpose of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt About the Identity of William Shakespeare – to challenge Stratfordian claims that there is "no room for doubt" head on. They have an enormous psychological investment in the idea that the case for Shakespeare is unassailable. It's a strong position for them to take, but also their greatest vulnerability. If it were ever called into serious question, it would be a tremendous psychological blow.

To continue suppressing the authorship issue, Stratfordians must distract attention from (1) the evidence, and (2) the fact that many very credible people are authorship doubters. If people realize that not all authorship doubters are crazy, and the evidence is not nearly as clear-cut as the orthodox have claimed, cognitive dissonance will lead to reassessment. The orthodox need to keep the issue bottled up. Our goal should be to break it wide open.

The Declaration was written to (1) make the issue understandable to a general audience by providing a concise, definitive presentation of the evidence for and against Shakspeare, (2) call attention to the many highly credible doubters of the past, and (3) provide a way for present-day doubters, especially the prominent ones, to put themselves on the record. In effect, the Declaration first "argues from authority" by displaying the names of twenty prominent past doubters,

then presents the evidence and arguments that made them doubt, and then invites present-day doubters to take their stand with the prominent past doubters.

The fact that so many highly credible people have expressed doubt is one of our strongest points. It is not credible to say that the twenty people named in the Declaration, including some of our greatest writers and thinkers, are all just class snobs and conspiracy theorists. We need to build on that list, and the Declaration itself offers the ideal tool for recruiting. We have many prominent supporters, but have lacked a way to bring that support to bear.

Now, anyone can quickly and easily go on record by reading and signing the Declaration.

The Declaration is factual in content, moderate in tone and understated in its conclusions. It is intended to come across as objective and eminently reasonable to belie Stratfordians' negative stereotypes of us and maximize the number of people who will feel comfortable signing it. It is also intended to unite non-Stratfordians behind something we all agree on, while attracting support from a few moderate Stratfordians who value academic freedom, and isolating extremists who object to the issue being regarded as legitimate in academia. The narrative format we used accommodates an enormous amount of factual information. Having just one chance to communicate our message, we wanted it to be very substantial. If the orthodox try to write a counter-declaration, they will have a hard time topping ours.

Why did we form a new organization, The Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, to issue it? Mainly to issue the Declaration under the auspices of an organization that's neutral about the author's true identity. If the point is to keep the focus on the weakness of the case for the Stratford man, it should not be issued by an organization that advocates someone else. Then Stratfordians could simply change the subject by attacking the alternative candidate. Another reason was to try to unite non-Stratfordians behind the one thing we all agree on. Finally,

we found that a special-purpose organization was needed to focus on this project. SAC is dedicated just to promoting the Declaration, and legitimizing the authorship issue.

Now that the Declaration is in the public domain, it can be useful to us in many ways.

1. Any student, teacher or professor who wishes to pursue the authorship issue can use it as a definitive statement of why the issue should be regarded as legitimate.
2. Anyone writing a letter to the editor to challenge something an orthodox scholar has written can refer to the Declaration as a definitive statement of our positions.
3. Orthodox scholars have to think twice about claiming there's "no room for doubt" lest they be challenged to respond directly to the case laid out in the Declaration.
4. It is more difficult to stereotype and mischaracterize our views now that we have written a definitive statement of them that has been endorsed by so many people. Authors of books about authorship doubters, for example, ignore it at their peril.
5. It can be used to introduce the issue to newcomers. It's easier to get someone to read a 3,000-word declaration than buy and read a book, or join an organization. They might not sign it right away, but it's a convenient way to get them thinking. Reading a presentation of the case for reasonable doubt is a logical starting place.
6. We can organize Declaration signing ceremonies to try to attract media attention. Any time we can get ten prominent supporters together who are willing to sign it, we can create an occasion to sign one of the poster-sized copies (e.g., the Sept. 8 signing event in Chichester, following Mark Rylance's play about the authorship).

## ***THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER***

The Shakespeare Oxford Society welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters, and news items of relevance to Shakespeare, Edward de Vere and the Authorship Discussion. *It is the policy of the Shakespeare Oxford Society to require assignment of copyright on any article submitted to the Newsletter.* Please contact the editor with any questions.

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7. At some point when we have enough signatories, and especially prominent ones, we can formally challenge the orthodox to write a counter-declaration to explain to the public why they claim there is “no room for doubt.” As English professors, they have no excuse for not being able to explain their position, as we have done. Why, after 200 years, have they been so unable to put the authorship issue to rest? Why write highly speculative “biographies,” rather than one definitive document? If the evidence for their man is so clear, why bother with the *ad hominem* attacks? Our case is based on evidence, not attacks. Why can’t the professors do the same? If we are all fools, they should be able to make short work of us. Why don’t they?

#### How you can help

1. Put the Declaration to use! It should be seen as a resource for the non-Stratfordian community. People can read it, sign it, and download it at any time at our website. It presents a powerful case against the Stratford man, and anyone is free to use it. We hope it will provide a focal point for a major challenge to Stratfordian claims. The past doubter quotes, and lists of signatories, are impressive. Put them to use.
2. If you have not yet signed the Declaration, please do so. Go to the SAC website at [www.DoubtAboutWill.org](http://www.DoubtAboutWill.org) and just follow the directions. Every signature counts, and the more signatures we have, the more comfortable others will be in signing. Prominent people have the greatest impact, but they want to be in good company. Academic signatories are very

important because they provide assurance that the Declaration can withstand scrutiny; and they also give us legitimacy in academia. Second in importance only to signing it yourself is to encourage others to sign it. The more signatures we have, the more useful the Declaration will be to all of us.

3. Encourage every authorship organization of which you are a member to endorse the Declaration, and urge all of their members to sign it and promote it to others. We would like to create a norm that all authorship doubters sign the Declaration.
4. Keep an eye out for opportunities to hold signing events to attract media attention. All it takes is ten credible signatories organized around some newsworthy theme. Shakespearean actors and theater groups are often fertile ground for such events.

We have nine years until 2016, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the Stratford man. Unless we succeed in raising serious doubt that he was really the great author, humanity will celebrate him in ignorance, and the generation of authorship doubters that came into being following the publication of Ogburn’s *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* will have failed. It remains to be seen whether there is any Shakespeare authorship issue.

*John M. Shahan is Chairman and CEO of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC). He is an independent scholar and a former health researcher with the State of California, and with Kaiser Permanente of Southern California. He is also a former vice president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, and is currently on the editorial board of The Oxfordian.*

## SAVE THE DATE!

### SF and SOS Announces Joint Conference

**October 4-7, 2007 in Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA**

The Shakespeare Authorship Conference, jointly sponsored by the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society, will be held October 4-7, 2007 in Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA. The Pacific Repertory Theatre/Carmel Shake-speare Festival, and Artistic Director Stephen Moorer will host the conference and will be presenting A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Macbeth.

So far, the list of proposed speakers includes Roger Stritmatter, Lynne Kositsy, Richard Whalen, Rima Greenhill, Earl Showerman, Ramon Jimenez, Frank Davis, Ren Draya, Alex McNeil, Tom Regnier, John Shahan, Richard Roe, Helen Roe, Carole sue Lipman, Lew Tate, John Hamill, Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, Allegra Kraszneckewicz, Peter Austin-Zacharias, Stephen Moore, Matthew Cossolotto. Ren Draya has agreed to host the post-play panel discussions.

If you are interested in presenting a paper at the Conference, please send a title and a one-paragraph abstract to either John Hamill ([hamillx@pacbell.net](mailto:hamillx@pacbell.net)) or Bonner Cutting ( [jcutting@houston.rr.com](mailto:jcutting@houston.rr.com)).



The Shakespearean Authorship Trust & Brunel University  
Present

The 2007 John Silberrad Memorial Lectures on The Shakespeare Authorship Question  
Shakespeare's Globe, Bankside, London  
All programmes begin at 7.15 pm.

1st November: Sir Derek Jacobi\* and Mark Rylance  
In Conversation with William Leahy (Brunel Univ.)

\*Subject to availability.

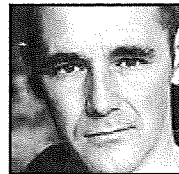
### **Reflections on the Authorship Controversy**

Two world-class Shakespearean actors, both non-Stratfordians, talk about their interest in the authorship question and what drew them away from the path of Shakespearean orthodoxy. They share their insights into the plays and the authorship, and answer questions from the audience.



**Sir Derek Jacobi** began his acting career at Cambridge, where he won a scholarship in history in 1957. After a stint at the Birmingham Repertory Company, he was invited by Laurence Olivier to become a founding member of the new National Theatre. Equally accomplished in film and television, he achieved stardom as the Roman Emperor Claudius in the immensely popular BBC series *I, Claudius* in 1976, for which he won a BAFTA. From 1982 to 1985 he joined the RSC, winning a Tony for his performance of Benedick in *Much Ado*. His triumphs since then, on both stage and screen, have been continuous.

Like Olivier before him, Jacobi has had two knighthoods conferred on him, one British and one Danish.



**Mark Rylance**, actor and Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe (1996-2005), was born in England in 1960 and raised in America until 1978. A professional actor since 1980, he has acted in 48 productions of plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Mark is an Associate Artist of the RSC, a friend of the Francis Bacon Research Trust, Patron of the Marlowe Society, an honorary bencher of the Middle Temple Hall, and Chairman of the Shakespearean Authorship Trust. His latest work is an original play for The Chichester Festival Theatre and London Theatre of Imagination entitled, *The Big Secret Live "I am Shakespeare"* Webcam Daytime Chatroom Show.

**Dr. William Leahy** is Head of English at Brunel University and is convenor of the MA in Shakespeare Authorship Studies.

8th November: Diana Price

### **Shakespeare: Evidence of an Authorship Problem**

Although Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians are looking at the same documentary evidence on which William Shakespeare's biography is constructed, they come to radically different conclusions. A review of criteria reveals how each side frames questions and tests assumptions. The principal consensus-driven assumptions underlying the traditional biography provide the foundation for numerous theories of attributions, textual transmission, and biographical details. However, anti-Stratfordian claims have had a surprising effect on some of these theories, putting pressure on

traditional scholars to propose hypotheses they otherwise would consider untenable. Such proposals are vulnerable and provide an opportunity for anti-Stratfordians to engage with the orthodox, on their turf.



**Diana Price** is the author of *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography: New Evidence of an Authorship Problem*. This book was published in 2001 by Greenwood Press in its series, "Contributions in Drama and Theatre Studies," making Ms. Price the first

author to publish on this controversial subject in a peer-reviewed academic series. Prior to her book, Ms. Price challenged a favourite anti-Stratfordian argument when she introduced the first known image of Shakespeare's Stratford monument in *The Review of English Studies*, published by Oxford University Press. She later proposed a solution to another unsolved mystery in Elizabethan theatrical his-

tory in the journal *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*. She has also been published in *Skeptical Magazine*. She was the keynote speaker at an authorship event at the Smithsonian Institution, a presenter at a continuing legal education seminar at The University of Tennessee, and regularly speaks to audiences at academic forums, libraries, and civic organizations.

### 15th November: Dr. Penny McCarthy

#### *William Shakespeare and his pseudonyms*



Penny McCarthy asks whether the academic consensus on the authorship of the plays and poems attributed to William Shakespeare of Stratford is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is true, she answers, but not 'wholly' and certainly not 'nothing but'. What is missing from the picture can be summarized as the vital framework of Patronage and Coterie.

Her research into the literature of the Dudley/Sidney circle and its political tincture led her to puzzle over certain texts. They are all by R.L., or by shadowy authors whose names begin with those initials. Who is R.L.? What is his relationship with William Smith, with Humphrey King, with Cuddy,

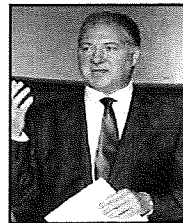
with Gaveston, with the Old Lad . . . with William Shakespeare? The answers may alter profoundly our view of the dating of Shakespeare's works, the shape of his corpus, his standing among his contemporaries as a poet, and his social standing.

**Penny McCarthy** taught classics in secondary schools and English as a second language to adults before taking her MA and D. Phil. in English renaissance literature at Sussex University. She is a Senior Honorary Research Fellow at Glasgow University, and has published a number of articles in academic journals on the literary works of the Sidney circle, and on Vladimir Nabokov. She has also published poems in various journals. Her book *Pseudonymous Shakespeare* was published by Ashgate in 2006.

### 22nd November: Prof Graham Holderness

#### *'For that I came': Shakespearean Selves*

Thirty years ago the author was dead, subjectivity was an effect of power and the idea of autobiography inconceivable. Hence the Shakespeare Authorship Question could only be read symptomatically, and remained on the outskirts of academia. Today the author is alive and well again, subjectivity has been restored to both author and critic, and Shakespeare's biography is being written over and over again. It has been found necessary not only to restore the authorial life-history as a primary source of the work, but to obtrude the critic's own life-experience onto the scene of reading. At the same time autobiographical writing on Shakespeare is often coloured by a postmodern scepticism about the very bases of the form, and tends towards the playful and conjectural. This lecture will explore the implications of these developments with some illustrations from the work of Stephen Greenblatt.



**Graham Holderness** is Professor of English at the University of Hertfordshire. His books include *D.H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction* (1982), *Shakespeare's History* (1985), *The Shakespeare Myth* (1988), *Shakespeare: the histories* (2000), *Anglo-Saxon Verse* (2000), *Cultural Shakespeare: essays in the Shakespeare Myth* (2001), *Visual Shakespeare: essays in film and television* (2002) and *Textual Shakespeare: Writing and the Word* (2003). His novel *The Prince of Denmark* was published in 2002, and his collection *Craeft* (2002) awarded a Poetry Book Society recommendation. He has also published many chapters and journal articles in literature, drama and theology, including contributions to *Textual Practice*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Survey*, *Literature and Theology* and *Harvard Theological Review*. Current research projects include Shakespeare in the Arab world (funded by AHRC), and the representation of Christ in literature. He is editor of *Critical Survey*, and a Fellow of the English Association.

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(cont'd from p. 14)

pere, conjures Bate, had channeled all his creative powers, not into his family, but into his work, his theater company and the thrill of those extraordinary occasions when he found himself—a grammar boy from the provinces with no university education—witnessing the King of England and Scotland, with all his court, listening in rapt attention as his words were spoken from the platform of the banquet hall in the royal palace. Truly an eccentric flight of imagination for a scholarly collected work.

There is no evidence *Macbeth* was performed for King James, but one might ask: Was it Shakspeare's "thrill" back then or is it Bate's "thrill" today as he imagines what it must have been like in a royal court? Does Bate betray a whiff of repellent snobbery here? Would he decline an invitation to Buckingham Palace to be knighted by the queen?

In general, Bate holds that topical allusions and autobiographical material are rare in Shakespeare's works while, at the same time, finding pervasive the sense that the plays are a mirror of the real world. He does not try to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory assertions which are expressed in the same sentence.

Bate makes much of his decision to use the First Folio texts as the primary basis for the *RSC Shakespeare*, which he calls "The First Folio Restored." He accuses all the other editions of using a pick-and-mix method of conflating the First Folio text with quarto texts where they exist. For some plays, he says, this conflation has been most damaging. He expresses astonishment that the First Folio has not been edited, that is, reproduced with the correction of presumed printers' errors and modernization of spelling and punctuation for three hundred years. Rasmussen told this reviewer that he and his team keyed in and proofed every word of the First

Folio, more than half a million words, before correction and modernization.

Bate defends at some length his rationale for giving priority to the First Folio texts, concluding: In some cases, the quartos are probably closer to Shakespeare's original manuscript draft, but the First Folio is undoubtedly closer to his playhouse. For an edition such as this one, which is commissioned by a Shakespearean acting company, the copy text has to be the one authorized by Shakespeare's own acting company.

There is, however, no evidence that the King's Men authorized the play texts. Bate asserts on no evidence at all that the actors John Heminges and Henry Condell, whose names appear at the bottom of two dedicatory letters in the First Folio, prepared the play texts for the printers. They were hardly qualified although Ben Jonson was.

In the end, however, relegating the quartos and centuries of scholarly editing to the periphery is not all that significant. For half the plays, the First Folio is the only text, and for thirteen more the differences are minor. Only five quartos are significantly different: *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Troilus and Cressida*.

Hewing to the First Folio texts does produce at least one significant visual difference. In other editions, when one speaker ends with a half line of iambic pentameter and the next speaker's line supplies the rest of it, editors have indented the second half to indicate a full line of iambic pentameter shared by two speakers. The First Folio does not, nor does the *RSC Shakespeare*.

The introduction and appendices are much shorter than those in the other four annotated editions. For Oxfordians, the Riverside edition probably remains the most useful. The others are Stephen Greenblatt's Norton, *The Oxford Shakespeare* by Stanley Wells and Gary

Taylor, and David Bevington's Harper Collins/Longman edition. Rasmussen expresses a huge debt to Bevington.

Also of some interest in this edition:

It accepts as Shakespeare's handwriting the four manuscript pages for a scene in *Sir Thomas More*.

The footnotes to the play texts put extra emphasis on bawdy double meanings.

Omitted from the general introduction is any mention or image of today's Stratford monument, or Dugdale's 1634 sketch of the sack-holder in the original monument, or the enigmatic epitaph.

It attributes to Shakespeare the short poem "To the Queen", described as an epilogue to a play performed in court in 1599, which remained unknown in manuscript until the late twentieth century. The Riverside edition of 1974 printed it but said it was claimed as "possibly by Shakespeare" by William Ringler and Steven May who is known to many Oxfordians. Bate does not credit them or say why he accepts it now as certainly by Shakespeare.

Finally and surprisingly, he calls the Sonnets a kind of exercise...demonstrations of his effortless verbal facility.

Other Shakespeare textual scholars will certainly disagree with some of Bate's somewhat eccentric editing and interpretations. Perhaps one of them will do a thorough analysis of this latest edition for a journal.

*The RSC Shakespeare* is supplemented by a web site at [www.RSCShakespeare.com](http://www.RSCShakespeare.com), which includes a long article by Bate expanding on his decision to use the First Folio as the primary text. One of the links connects to his blog wherein he summarizes and comments on early reviews. At this writing, they are mostly positive.