

***Shakespeare Suppressed:  
The Uncensored Truth About Shakespeare and His Works  
A Book of Evidence and Explanation***

**by Katherine Chiljan**

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**reviewed by William Ray**

This book marks the advent of a new standard in Shakespeare scholarship.

It can be a mistake to review newly published books, when there has been no time to fully assimilate their content. In the interests of topicality one writes from first instincts. Certainly the reviews of *Contested Will* by James Shapiro had the breathless, hectic character of an all-night-typing tomorrow's term paper. Former *New York Times* cultural editor William S. Niederkorn wrote a more considered evaluation in the *Brooklyn Rail* much later. *Contested Will* is on this study's topic, the dubious authorship of the Shakespeare canon by William Shakspeare of Stratford. Professor Shapiro found nothing questionable but the competence of the questioners, among them Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, James, Clemens, Keller, Chaplin, Freud, Galsworthy, Joyce, and an assembling host in modern law, arts, and letters. By contrast Chiljan faces the issue fully, historically, after twenty-five years of historical and textual research.

An employed academic could not have written this book. Not one biographically-focused English PhD dissertation on Shakespeare has been approved since 2001, and none before then. Investigating Shakespeare's historicity is an industry-wide taboo. In compliance with the doctrinal proscription, there is neither personal time nor university support for this embargoed area of work—work which Ralph Waldo Emerson described as “the first of all literary questions.” The precise question: who actually wrote the works of Shakespeare? The crown prince of English literature continues to be a ghost in the house of knowledge.

Chiljan states in her introduction that she is certain the identity “Shakespeare” should be traced to the prodigal Renaissance genius Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, but adds, “This book however will not present his case for the Shakespeare authorship.” Rather, she sets out to prove that Shakspeare of Stratford was not “Shakespeare,” and to distinguish between the reputed and actual author. In the end, the reader knows by default who wrote the works.

*Shakespeare Suppressed* utilizes established historiographic methods, especially relying upon previously ignored records and texts. They were not considered relevant

under the paradigm of an unlettered figure exploding upon English literature in the early 1590s, only to recede c. 1612. The carefully documented descriptive Elizabethan history is convincingly corroborated by the author's at times astounding knowledge of Tudor and Jacobean literature.

The best proof of that lies in her list of *ninety-three* contemporary references to Shakespearean plays, occurring far earlier than the conventional chronology, which is based on the available dates of Shakspeare of Stratford in London. That chronology relies on the assumption that the plays were written by him immediately before the performance dates in the 1590's through 1612. This notion eventually sank into the cultural consciousness as an instructive political parable, that Everyman can accomplish wonders if he just applies himself. The parable contains a preceptive truth. The question is whether the facts confirm Shakspeare's exemplification of it.

Some "too-early" listings appear in the text and then are consolidated in an appendix. There are additional appendices for critical dedications and contemporary texts. The book shows practiced skill at pictorial analysis. The plates are superior to those usually available in the major publishing industry. The name index is excellent. Literary works are italicized, including several recondite titles. Each chapter has a conclusion section, as do the five major divisions of the study. For summary purposes, one could read these as an overview of the argument. Most unusually, there is a final section, "Conjectures and Dares," wherein the author writes more freely about what must have happened, given previously presented data, but recognizes much may never be proven to a certainty. In this, she tends toward the disciplined wing of historiography, telling the story without succumbing to the usual occupational pitfalls, presumption, interpolation, and unwarranted generalization. Such a cautious temperament produces a more credible account. Limitation exists as a realistic anchor, not an obstruction to inquiry.

As readers, we should note the magnitude of the author's intention. The persona and works of Shakespeare are the most prestigious symbols of art and artist in world literature. A diverse industry across two continents labors to foster access to that work. That the Stratford legend of its author may be a lie, owing to a Jacobean political fabrication that became the paradigm, conveyed with priest-like dignities and patronizing commentary from the august towers of learning, is still too much shock for our conditioned intelligentsia and trusting public to absorb. Shifting the paradigm would have reverberations throughout the culture. But if this apostasy is fact, then records and texts of the time will verify it.

### **I. Using Texts and Records**

I have referred to neglected texts as the key feature of the book's argument. The skeptic may ask why they have not been referenced before now. *Shakespeare Suppressed* states no view how the contemporaneous references occurred or why they have not been recognized. The fact they exist is enough. In my opinion, because of ignorance about the practice of middle-class Elizabethan authors to convey forms of deference or satire through allusion, prior researchers have not noted embedded

encomia referring to the high personage and great works of someone we have conflated into the pseudonymous identity “Shakespeare.” The contemporaneous allusions honored him as a great author and as a high nobleman. The information slipped below scholarly focus for lack of a context within which to understand it. Asides, digs, and sly allusions also characterized the charged exchanges between and among members of the Elizabethan writing class, and allusive quotations served as notice that one knew the underground messaging system. Some contextual meaning inevitably fades, and only focused attention uncovers an era’s evocations before that happens.

Chiljan has no trouble finding such allusions. She compiled her “too-early” examples with line-to-line or phrase-to-phrase parallels between Shakespearean language and the contemporary references. It made sleuthing the greatest mystery in literature look fairly obvious. But to get to the plateau of knowledge required, there must have been an extensive foreground, reading a great deal of Elizabethan literature and official State records.

The “too-early for Shakspeare” results illuminate an important question: when could have Shakspeare written the plays? The Stratfordian answer necessarily compresses the entire career of the unheralded genius into twelve years (1592-1604) or twenty years (1592-1612), with virtually nothing published in quarto to document the later works.

But if the plays were confirmed to be dated earlier than the putative author had been able to write them, the Stratford narrative fails. The Shakespeare establishment finds itself asserting circular reasoning, interpolating backwards from a necessary result to an assumed but undocumented genesis.

As an example among the ninety-three “too-early for Shakspeare proofs,” let us read a famous passage in *Hamlet*, the archetypal Shakespearean play traditionally dated to 1600-01. “The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals; and yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust?” (2.2.315-17) No one doubts it is Shakespeare. An anonymous play, *Histrion-mastix* (c. 1589) contains the light-hearted language: “One of the goodliest spaniels I have seen. –And here’s the very quintessence of ducks.” “Spaniel-Spaniard” satirically alluded to Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* and its lead actor Edward Alleyn: “O sweetheart, the Spaniards are come!” Then the dig at the Spanish Armada disaster in “Here’s the very quintessence of ducks,” using *Hamlet*’s lofty language to jeer again. As Thomas Nashe had written that year of “whole *Hamlets* of speeches,” this sequence may be typical of the “*Hamlets*” he meant—freely altered repeats of recently known vivid phrasing. The significant point is the play *Hamlet* existed, and was widely known in its essential dramatic form, three to five years before the putative debut of the Stratford Shakspeare. We need not go into the hypothetical that a twenty-three-year-old countryman of no known education had to have written a courtly play, oddly mirroring the life of de Vere, that ranks in grandeur with Sophocles’ last tragedies. Another popular notion is that he stole from the never-seen and then forever-lost and forever-convenient “Ur-*Hamlet*.” Neither defense withstands abundant evidence to the contrary. The facts support a much earlier *Hamlet*. Chiljan lists no less than eleven additional too-early *Hamlet*

references besides “the quintessence of ducks.”

The default position which the Shakespeare establishment takes with this anomaly is that Shakespeare was the greatest thief in literary history as well as, simultaneously, the greatest author. The proposition offends plausibility, as does the associated rationalization that the Gentle Master “would surely have” copied many [ninety-three?] lesser writings, and not the opposite, that they copied him as a cherished literary and aristocratic icon. (The honorific Gentle in that post-feudal era of “ruthless and gigantic caste” referred to high rank, not mild temperament. Neither Oxford nor Shakspeare was saintly.)

The reader may wonder, if the truth is that “Shakespeare,” whoever he was, did not rob his peers, how then did the legend of plagiarism begin? There is always a germ of truth in legend. First, as we have just seen, plagiarism, though self-contradictory to our concept of the Shakespeare persona, is still a handy fig-leaf to explain inexplicably early versions of the plays.

But Chiljan locates the legendary plagiarism as definitively as has ever been done in Shakespeare criticism, with Shakspeare, not “Shakespeare.” She proves he was an imposter known to publishers and printers, as the pseudonym and the imposter’s name were nearly identical verbally and graphically. Her proof lies not in sordid contracts but in the artful words of Ben Jonson. Shakspeare is immortalized in *Every Man Out of His Humor* as Sogliardo (fool in Italian and an anagram for “O’s liar dog”) as well as Sordido, the grain-dealer. His arms, motto, his fallacious Gentleman status, all get the knife. He is the plagiarizing country/town-gull Stephen/Mathew in *Every Man in His Humor*. *Return From Parnassus*, Part II, refers to Gullio, another gull--the name also pointedly resembling Gulielmus, Latin for William. John Weaver levels the insult of gross weight at “fat Gullio.” We get a hint of Shakspeare’s intimidating physical presence, not unlike the powerful looking figure of his father at the first version of the Stratford Shakespeare Monument, as sketched by Dugdale in 1634.

Shakspeare also is Crispinus in *The Poetaster*, Crispinus denoting “curly” in Latin, a derogation related to Shakspeare’s wool-broker background. Jonson wrote explicitly, “Crispinus, alias Cri-spinas, poetaster [star dogging the poet] and plagiarist” (5.3). The hyphenated name refers sardonically to pseudonymity, as in Shake-speare. Spinus is a Latin word alluding to the thorn bush. There are too many direct hits here for the watchman to report all’s well at the border. I don’t remember having seen this powerful a collection of iconoclastic damage in any other work on the authorship question.

Chiljan also found unmistakable satire of Shakspeare in the Shakespeare oeuves themselves. The reader is referred to William in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, to Clown and Shepherd in *The Winter’s Tale*, William in *As You Like It*, William the thieving cook and William Visor the intentionally overlooked criminal in *2Henry IV*, and to the murderous Stephano in *The Tempest*. This last reference, to Stephano nearly murdering Prospero in order to take over the island, alludes all the way back to a word usage in Oxford’s first published essay, wherein he said not sponsoring Bedingfield’s translation of *Cardanus Comforte* would be “to have murdered” it “in the wast bottomes of my chestes.” The true Shakespeare suffered spiritual murder,

in part through the mendacity of the fool he had immortalized. Shakspere's cheerful petty theft was tolerated, if we trust the repeated "countenance" language in *The Winter's Tale*, because any diversion away from the true author maintained his public anonymity. The coup de grace to Oxford the artist occurred with the First Folio. It both hailed Shakspere as "Shakespeare"/Shake-speare and, for clever posterity, signaled the true author, too. One should not forget Oxford's own farsighted puns scattered through the works, for instance that *The Winter's Tale* translated to French is *Le Conte d'Hiver*, homonymic to *Le Comte d'Ever*, the Count de Vere (the rank of count, not used in England, was the equivalent of that of earl). This is one possible reason for the choice of title.

I have given examples of proof here, but I have not captured the scale of probative investigation that characterizes each chapter of the study. Its level of erudition may be judged by an impromptu list of unfamiliar sources: *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series of the Reign of James I (1603-10)* (1857); John Nichols, *Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First* (1828); T.B. Howell, *A Complete Collection of State Trials and proceedings for high treason and other crimes and misdemeanors* (1816); *Correspondences of King James VI of Scotland with Sir Robert Cecil and Others in England, during the Reign of Elizabeth* (1861), et al. Remarkable to me in the bibliography is how few cited monographs date from 2000. Other than portrait literature, only the works of Marcy L. North on anonymity stand out as recent. This buttresses the point below that there really isn't much of value from the departments recently, due to doctrinal strictures.

## II. Institutional Implications

Two implications arise from Chiljan's traditional textual and historical methodologies, dovetailed to near-universally neglected contemporary literature. First, it highlights that the Academy has hamstrung any possible intellectual advance in this subject matter, producing in effect historical fiction about the wrong man rather than fostering verifiable Shakespearean biography. The cause rests at least partly with the departmental approach to research, which is intrinsic to higher education. That division of educational labor, begun to provide trained professional employees for a mass economy, combines with Shakespearean Academy's embarrassing avoidance syndrome to foreclose factual inquiry. The responsibility of intellectuals is to make that factual inquiry, and to unmask falsehood in any guise. Neither can happen under present conditions.

In short, the most critical subset in Shakespearean studies, the author's connection to the text, is censured from acceptable and customary scholarship. The first error, suppressing historical inquiry into the author enigma, inevitably produces another, English students quickly learning what not to allow themselves to think, say, and essay. Deeply perplexed avocational scholars have stepped into the empty space in recent years.

Institutional denial is more common to sectarian religion. Recent partisan remarks by Shapiro, that Roland Emmerich's film *Anonymouse* has all blond heroes

and all dark [non Aryan] heavies, as well as Stephen Greenblatt's comparison of Stratford doubters to Holocaust deniers, tell us a great deal about the antagonistic state of affairs in the University departments to whom the culture has delegated the Shakespearean inquiry. They are historiographically ignorant, incompetent to represent the issue on the national stage, and, resistive to the facts, personally annoyed more than wholesomely inquiring. At about the same time Shapiro slandered Emmerich, Stanley Wells of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust attributed a huge fraud discovery to Shapiro that plainly he should have credited to the research of Dr. John Rollett. But Rollett has Oxford connections, though he is not an Oxfordian. Shapiro hid an extremely indirect reference to Rollett's prior discovery, in the little-to-be-read bibliography chapter of *Contested Will*, and avoided even mentioning Rollett's name. His actions have some of the sly characteristics of premeditated fraud. Shapiro, Greenblatt, and Wells betray themselves and their professional ethics.

Compared to all this, the gifted devoted Katherine Chiljan, BA(UCLA), wins the day with an authentic contribution to knowledge. Sigmund Freud opined that talent is universal, only character is rare. She is not a novice, having found and edited the indispensable primary texts, which are published in *Dedications to the Earl of Oxford* (1994) and *Letters and Poems of Edward, Earl of Oxford* (1998).

The second implication of *Shakespeare Suppressed* is how shallow the prevailing orthodox scholarship seems in comparison. Stanley Wells of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust published his latest book recently: *Shakespeare, Sex, & Love*. We have noted the decades-long absence of departmental discoveries. Apparently, as before the Copernican Revolution, everything has stagnated in entrenched ambitions and unexamined assumptions.

There are at least two dramatic exceptions to the prevailing inert belief system. One is the work of Alastair Fowler, who takes no position on the authorship question, but whose book, *Triumphal Forms*, virtually clinches the argument that the Sonnets were written by an highly erudite Renaissance mind, with specific numerological intent. The other is Ted Hughes' *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*, a near discovery of Edward de Vere through tracing Shakespeare's unconscious personification of the boar as uncontrollable animal Desire. De Vere's heraldic or totem animal was the boar. But Hughes was not looking for the author.

What is to be done about the impasse? The Shakespeare establishment must be realistic. The faults of false certainty and its obverse, denial, lie within, whether a person or an organization. In this case, literary criticism, no one can analyze artistic work accurately if artificially, doctrinally banned from the social and biographical context where the art rooted and grew. I have heard English professors even insist, perhaps under status duress, that interpretative analysis is entirely subjective, *ipso facto* discountable as evidence in the question of authorial identity. This is a convenient confusion between determining legal guilt by hearsay and determining literary identification by demonstrations of distinctive imagery and style, the latter of which being what the establishment pretextually forbids but *Shakespeare Suppressed* accomplishes so effectively. It is also cheap relativism that achieves

nothing good scholastically or morally.

The empirical fact the Shakespeare professional pretends not to know is that there is no basis by which to identify Shakspere the man with Shakespeare the work. Shakspere was a predatory and miserly person, not an artistic one. Chiljan pursues that principle in minute unmistakable detail. It has always been available from the record.

But in the broader sense, any attempt to separate interpretive analysis and biography from literary criticism is unrealistic. It means rejecting most critical literature in the last two hundred years, including much written about the Shakespearean canon – a body of work Walt Whitman described as “in some respects greater than anything else in recorded literature.” Surely these are self-laming measures to protect a defective but entrenched doctrinal narrative.

We need not jettison interpretive analysis. In every other literary field but Shakespeare, critical studies have expanded our artistic and cultural knowledge through sensible and sensitive biographical-to-historical correlation, bringing together the life and work of artists into understandable integrity. Every mind lives and breathes in a social frame. Shapiro’s crank theory that 16<sup>th</sup> century literature did not comprehend autobiography comes to mind. Of course Henry Miller would not fit into a tyrannical religious state, and personal confession was not a literary device. That was why the device of allegory was in use. And the poetry of Shakespeare, Vaux, Dekker, Donne were utterly self-conscious.

A further Stratfordian avoidance mechanism, recently expressed in the *Times Literary Supplement* exchanges and elsewhere, is that enjoyment and comprehension of a work of art don’t need the maker’s biography or even our seeing his byline. (Who cares who wrote Shakespeare? We have the plays, don’t we?) Who cares who wrote the Ninth Symphony or painted the Guernica? Art and artist are inextricable though not identical.

Trends come and go like shibboleths. In the 1980s, deconstructionism completely divorced author from work. The Author died, so to speak. New Historicism responded with imaginative biography, such as Greenblatt’s ficto-bio *Will in the World*. One reaches the point of absurdity if either of these standards dominates methodology, i.e., knowing as little as possible about a creation’s creator is the best state of appreciation and knowledge; or, imagining into the artist’s life is more worthwhile than factually tracing his human fate. The first is overeducated stupidity. The second is dishonest fiction. History and biography either make sense of a life and work or they force us to reconsider the accuracy of our initial assumptions. The Oxfordian challenge in questioning first assumptions and thereby discovering a more fertile subject matter, has produced the only salubrious new work in the field.

### **III. The Argument**

Doctrinal politics aside, what is Chiljan’s answer to the identity of “Shakespeare”? What does she say? I can indicate the depth of analysis, not repeat it. The reader has much to enjoy in following its path.

Facing off with “the Professor” or “the experts,” her straw-man conceits personifying the status quo view, she demonstrates that Edward de Vere concealed himself as a public author long before Shakspeare left Stratford; that there was never any proof that Shakspeare was a writer and little that he was an actor; that the “Shake-scene, upstart Crow” anecdote connected to the nascent “Shakespeare” actually had nothing to do with either “Shakespeare” or Shakspeare, a scholarly tour de force; that the 1593 poet-identity “Shakespeare/Shake-speare” was an invention made necessary to present veiled support for Henry Wriothesley as the rightful successor to Elizabeth; that the same denotation “Shakespeare” expanded ad hoc into dramatic literature in 1598; that Shakspeare the Stratfordian capitalized on the name confusion, and though it is likely Oxford protested effectively to stop the publication of quartos in six instances, only pointed literary characterizations, not Stationers’ Company law, denounced Shakspeare’s mendacity; that Oxford traded his personal literary acclaim for his son’s life in 1601, following the Essex Rebellion; and that the royal family succession triangle (Oxford, Elizabeth, and Southampton) was excised from history via the First Folio’s permanent transfer of “authorship” onto the Stratford counterfeit.

I see nothing surprising about this outline, since gaining familiarity with the Oxfordian literature. That bibliography is highlighted by *Shakespeare By Another Name* (Mark Anderson), *The Monument* (Hank Whittemore), *Edward Vere’s Geneva Bible* (Roger Stritmatter), *Great Oxford* (Richard Malim, ed.), the annotated *Macbeth* (Richard H. Whalen) and annotated *Othello* (Whalen and Ren Draya); *Shakespeare’s Lost Kingdom* (Charles Beauclerk); *Dating Shakespeare’s Plays* (Kevin Gilvary, ed.); and *Shakespeare’s Guide to Italy* (Richard P. Roe), which has been circulated and acclaimed privately since 2010.

The uniqueness of this book is its organization and quality and its lifelong commitment to the truth. *Shakespeare Suppressed* follows the facts step by step and advances our knowledge in several areas. An example: *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is widely termed a weak play from “Shakespeare’s” retirement phase, which he amended in collaboration with John Fletcher of the Jacobean playwright generation. By comparative textual analysis, simply comparing plot and phrases, Chiljan identifies this play with the very young (16-year-old) Oxford’s work, presented before the Queen at Oxford University as *Palamon and Arcite* in 1576. Records indicate she supplied him with royal capes and garments for the occasion. Historiographically, the play switches in an instant from being Stratfordian supportive evidence of Shakspeare’s uncharacteristically waning creativity, to a revised descendant of Oxford’s precocious playwrighting skills. Hence the crude derivative work. To corroborate the identification, Ben Jonson referred to it by Oxford’s original title, *Palomon*, in *Bartholomew Fair* (4.3) in 1614, well before the 1634 printed edition. The scholar unfamiliar with the early play as the basis for the later may not comprehend Jonson’s passing remark or its prodigious implications. Shakespearean history then has to re-form to suit the facts. Instead of the presumed and much-touted collaboration with Fletcher, so convenient to a later dating and to partisan muddying of the authorship itself, we are left with Fletcher picking up an old script, subplotting



it, then trying it on the stage long after Oxford died.

Similar proofs pass muster. Six plays before Elizabeth's 1570-80s court reappear as Shakespearean:

- *Troilus and Cressida* (1609) shares elements with *The History of Ajax and Ulysses* and *The History of Agamemnon and Ulysses*, (1572 and 1584 respectively.)
- *The History of Error* (1577) preceded *A Comedy of Errors* by seventeen years.
- *The History of Caesar* (1583) preceded *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar* by eleven years.
- *A History of Ariodante and Genevora* (1583) preceded *Much Ado About Nothing* by nine years.
- A shared critical element in *Titus and Gissippus* (1577) preceded *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1590) by thirteen years.

As Shakspeare was born in 1564, in an objective environment, this list would be sufficient to shake and shatter the Stratfordian chronology, unmasking an approximation created *post facto* to give credence to the Stratford Shakspeare claim to Shakespearean authorship. Chiljan relied on the prior work of Eva Turner Clark for some of the courtly records. Her contribution is the wealth of detail—plot changes, dates, performances, comparison to Chambers' traditional dating, publication. In so many words, the "lost plays" of Oxford are not lost. They were transformed in time into several of the familiar canon plays.

Chapter 5 discusses documents showing that Shakspeare was a grain broker, property owner, money-lender, and investor, but not a writer.

- The single document in 1595 interpreted as showing the man from Stratford to be an actor actually refers to Kempe, Shakespeare & Burbage as servants to the Lord Chamberlain to receive money on behalf of the Lord Chamberlain's Men acting troupe.
- In 1603, "Shakespeare" is mentioned as a member of the actors, but there is no evidence Lawrence Fletcher or William Shakespeare ever acted, and none of the latter being a playwright.
- Records of the Globe and the Blackfriars theaters show Shakespeare was an investor, but not a writer.
- The appointment of "Shakspear ye Player by Garter" to Gentleman status in 1596 does not mention him as a writer. Shakspeare never spelled his name "Shakespeare" until 1596, by which time it had become a famous name in England and the Continent.
- The Belott-Mountjoy case in 1612 says nothing about his being a writer, although another writer, George Wilkins, participated. He did not note "William Shakespeare" was a writer, actor, or famous playwright and poet, nor did the Court record.

These documents accord with others of the (seventy) legal records recording Shakspere, as a businessman, broker, theater and concession owner, and dealer in money, but never that he wrote any of the Shakespeare canon.

The argument thus gathered together in one chapter makes it a readily accessible source for future use. The book's skill in summarizing disparate sources into a cohesive frame of reference warrants describing *Shakespeare Suppressed* as a new standard in Shakespeare authorship studies. The reader may differ with individual points in the study, as I did concerning its treatment of *Willobie His Avis*. But that difference is made easier to contrast by the clarity of the chapter's presentation.

Chiljan has a particular gift for aesthetic insight, as, for instance, into why the creation of the Droeshout etching, the frontispiece to the First Folio, was important. She first connected the heretofore unknown young Droeshout to Gheeraerts, and then his etching's peculiar form to Jonson's First Folio strategy, expressed directly from the play *Every Man in His Humor*. Creating a "monster," we would say a Frankenstein, foreclosed a lot of reasonable questions. This pictorial shock-attack helped Jonson achieve the necessary identity switch. The public would not ask about authorial origins while gaping at a human-like monster. The past didn't exist. He was *sui generis*. Sir George Greenwood reacted somewhat more humorously, maybe in psychological self-defense, that the etching was of a "leering, hydrocephalic idiot."

Bamboozlement is not a new art form. The etching was only one detail. All the participants in the First Folio dedications can be traced to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, Lord Chamberlain from 1614, with the actors' names used to assure that Shakspere was their fellow Shakespearean thespian. Similarly, the Shakespeare Monument at Stratford-upon-Avon was a contrivance that co-opted an insignificant cenotaph to a wool merchant and formed a false shrine. How these two major falsehoods occurred provides the best reading in the book and its final triumph.

The crux of the story is political, why was it so governmentally important to separate Edward de Vere, Lord Oxford, from his lifetime writings, some of them vitriolically critical of the Cecils, who were his own in-laws and the de facto tyrants of Elizabethan and early Jacobean England? The book answers that pivotal question.

#### **IV. The Man Who Knew Too Much**

Oxford's intimate background with Elizabeth I and the extraordinarily treated youth, Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, was the dark shadow of Gloriana, a royal bloodline possibility so destabilizing to the State that it had to be eradicated or else just the continuing rumor would threaten the legitimacy of the Stuart monarchy and its succession. The political words Realpolitik or Machiavel give the basic idea. If ever there was a contract to efface an artist (who was both in and ahead of his historical era) to save face for everybody else, the Earl of Pembroke wrote it and made it stick.

Using state papers and exchanged letters almost exclusively for proof, *Shakespeare Suppressed* follows the systematic removal of Oxford's political input—

he died a broken man; of Southampton and his son, the remaining Tudor heirs, poisoned together in 1626; and of the origin of the Shakespeare works, effectively stolen and packed onto a convenient beast of burden for the indefinite future. There is never any space in the official histories for the losers and troublemakers. They become the stuff of tragedy.

It is almost breathtaking that Oxford wrote some of this history into the plays and poems as it unfolded like a nightmare in front of him. Chiljan found the connections, for instance how Robert Cecil blackmailed him to suppress his life's work to save his son. Again, it is not in a written State document. In *The Winter's Tale*, the King of Sicillia (i.e., Robert Cecil) commands a nobleman to take his daughter (Perdita—lost) out and abandon her. A bear (rampant power or authority) eats him alive. Autolycus the courtier eventually rescues the true rights of the nobleman's daughter (Art) because she gave such intrinsic evidence of nobility.

The author's exegesis characterizes that nobility (aristocracy) as so integral to the works that it becomes a contextual clue that would eventually lead posterity to "lost" art's progenitor. Dropping the allegory, Cecil blackmailed Oxford to abandon his rebellious troublemaking art and Oxford sacrificed his "daughter" for his son. Southampton was already in the Tower condemned. Oxford's writings were not yet gathered in print. The state papers document a sudden reversal of execution plans, never explained. Southampton was saved. Oxford's noble counterpart, Antigonus, who reminds us that Antigone was buried alive, is enjoined to secrecy about what he has had to do to satisfy the King of Sicilia. If he talked it would threaten the legitimacy of the succession. He did not and was left to live his own Greek tragedy.

*Shakespeare Suppressed's* interpretation of the daughter as being the personification of Art, appears elsewhere in Shakespeare, namely with Miranda in *The Tempest*, anagramming to "in drama" as a clue. Understanding these plays may have been obscured by the vagaries of time and the catastrophic ambitions of men, but the inquiring reader can still comprehend their, and their author's, profound thoughts.

Chiljan achieves her intention, separating the real and false, in such a measured, almost self-effacing, style that at first one is unaware of its persuasive power. This changes in the postscript, written to the Professor community (Chapter 18). She hands them a hot bucket of Hell for the cowardly way they have run Shakespeare studies, with the arrogant wrong-headed notion they have priestly veto power to say what is fact or not. She writes some rough things, but they are just and ought to be heard. The dignified transition to a more accurate paradigm of the literature and history of the early English nation-state—as well as just cleansing ourselves culturally from some entrenched and corrupting myths—are two substantial reasons to take heed.