

Letters to the Editor

Shakespeare in Germany and Austria

To the Editor:

It might be interesting for American readers to hear about activities here on the European continent regarding the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

Things are moving, albeit slowly, here in Europe; and in the right direction, at least as far as Shakespeare is concerned. I had the pleasure of contributing Oxfordian material to the programs of two Austrian theater productions of Shakespeare plays. In Innsbruck, the Kellertheater staged a play called *Cordelias Traum* (Cordelia's Dream), a variation on *King Lear*. They printed a few extracts from my book, *Das Shakespeare-Komplott* (The Shakespeare Plot), in their program. In Salzburg, the Elisabethbühne staged *Twelfth Night* and asked me to contribute an article on the Authorship Question to their theater magazine, as well as a short text on the possible dating of *Twelfth Night*.

For the first time, a German university professor has expressed interest in the problem and dealt with it in his class on English literature. Professor Werner Bleyhl, of Padagogische Hochschule Ludwigsburg, included *Das Shakespeare-Komplott* in his seminar on Shakespeare, and informs me that his students were convinced that the Earl of Oxford is the real author of the Shakespeare canon.

Austrian television is producing a 50-minute documentary on the Authorship Question, which is being co-produced by Arte, the German-French culture channel, and the BBC. The documentary is scheduled to be broadcast sometime in 1997.

Barbara Denscher, of Austrian State Radio (ORF), is making a one-hour program on the Authorship Question to be broadcast in early 1997 in a popular series called "Tonspuren. Dokumente zur Literatur." Also, Robert Detobel of Frankfurt has written two lengthy radio programs on the Authorship Question; one has been broadcast by Hessischer Rundfunk, the other has been commissioned by another state radio, Westdeutscher Rundfunk.

Sincerely,
Walter Klier
Innsbruck, Austria

Walter Klier is a writer, journalist, co-editor of the literary quarterly *Gegenwart*, and author of *Das Shakespeare-Komplott* (1994).

Marston, Derby and Shakespeare

To the Editor:

In reference to the probing article, "What did Marston know about Shakespeare?", by professor Patrick Buckridge (ER, vol. 4, no. 2), and his proposition on page 39: "He (Marston) knew that the more active member of the Shakespeare partnership, at least at the time that he was writing satires, in 1597-98, was William Stanley (6th Earl of Derby)..."

In correspondence with the present Earl of Derby, he has advised me:

"Though books have been written trying to prove that Shakespeare was my ancestor, this is a thing that has always been firmly denied by the family. However, the view has always been taken that Lord Derby was a great traveller and that it is highly unlikely that Shakespeare would have travelled. It has always been felt therefore that it was my ancestor who supplied Shakespeare with a great deal of background information for his plays and I think this could be highly probable." Signed: Yours sincerely, Derby.

Sincerely,
Derran K. Charlton
South Yorkshire, England

Patrick Buckridge responds: I find it interesting that the present Derby family (who I believe are Stanleys, though not by direct descent) exercises such a firm "self-denying ordinance" on the authorship question, and wonder if there's anything behind it apart from a reluctance to make waves in a Stratfordian world. Judging from Will Stanley's life-story, that reluctance might be a family trait—perhaps even extending, in his case, to the greatest self-denial in history! Maybe the present Earl is right, but I think there are some connections between his illustrious ancestor and the author of the Shakespeare canon that the "background-briefing" hypothesis doesn't quite explain.

Dering's *Henry IV*

To the Editor:

John Baker's claim to have found Shakespeare's MS of *Henry IV* (ER, vol. 4, no. 1) goes into considerable detail and is impressive but not conclusive except as establishing a possibility, it seems to me. The difficulty is that we have no yardstick by way of an authentic piece of Shakespeare's writing (however you spell him) to enable us to lay anything else alongside so that we can conclude to identity of hand. So one reads with puzzlement Baker's statement (p. 15; cf. p. 29), "handwriting still cannot be employed for the purposes of identification, unlike fingerprints." This is only true of MSS in Secretary hand, produced by professional scribes, which could be described as Elizabethan typewriting. Other hands were very distinctive, even when attempts were made to disguise

them, as in the case of the celebrated Montegale letter, which was almost certainly written by the Earl of Salisbury. (See my books on the Gunpowder Plot.)

However, there is a curious instance of Lord Burghley's writing which passes from a relative 'v round hand to the curiously angular style which was typical enough to identify his hand on all other occasions (see illustration, *The Dangerous Queen*, p. 400). I do not know of any other instance of this conscious or unconscious attempt to display virtuosity, or why Burghley did it. The letter is a copy, or alleged copy, in his hand of a letter from the 4th Duke of Norfolk to Queen Elizabeth. However, we may concede to so much trouble taken on Baker's part that "proponents of dependence concede that D wasn't a prompt book or foul papers. Could it then be an 'authorial fair copy'? The answer is yes" (p. 24). Again, "...palaeographically... D is a composite manuscript composed of sheets from several drafts of *Henry IV*. Generally, only authors possess such remainders" (p. 28). It may well be so but one would like some references for this.

Sincerely,
Francis Edwards, S.J. FSA
London, England

A Groatworth of Wit

To the Editor:

W. Ron Hess's article, "Robert Greene's Wit Re-Evaluated" (vol. 4, no. 2), has too many red herrings—like whether Greene wrote the book all at once or not—and strained thinking. It seems to me that the "upstart crow... with his *tygres heart wrapt in a players hyde*" has to refer to Shakespeare, especially as it's coupled with the italicized pun on "Shakespeare," *Shake-scene* (which is also capitalized, and was written by a man who elsewhere had referred to Marlowe as "Merlin").

Oxfordians are thus left with just three reasonable arguments: (1) Oxford acted under the name Shakespeare and Greene was audacious enough to call him an "upstart crow"; (2) Oxford was Shakespeare the actor/dramatist and Greene thought he was really a man named Shakespeare; or (3) Greene was part of the conspiracy to make people think Shaxsper was Shakespeare.

Sincerely,
Bob Grumman
Port Charlotte, Florida

Plucking the Tudor Rose

To the Editor:

Diana Price's article in *The Elizabethan Review* (vol. 4, no. 2), "A Fresh Look at the Tudor Rose Theory," was superb and should cause some individuals to abandon the Tudor Rose nonsense.

Sincerely,
Richard Edblom
Plymouth, Minnesota

To the Editor:

I hope the article by Diana Price in the autumn 1996 *Elizabethan Review* will convince the proponents of the Tudor Rose theory that they are wrong once and for all.

Sincerely,
Martha N. Walker
Baltimore, Maryland

To the Editor:

Few published elucidations of the true authorship of the Works Shakespeare have escaped me since first reading Looney in 1936, but I cannot recollect any so clear, concise, and meticulously documented as Diana Price's "A Fresh Look at the Tudor Rose Theory" in *The Elizabethan Review* (vol. 4, no. 2).

The Tudor Rose theory was introduced to me soon after this by London playwright Donald Anderson, as "a rattling good plot for a play," which he began but discarded "as distracting from the truth with a bizarre hypothesis which could grow into a fable and lead careless thinkers away from the recorded facts."

Congratulations also on Diana Price's simple explanation of the coronet that Lord Oxford sometimes scrawled over his signature, as seen on some English earls' envelopes today.

Sincerely,
Verily Anderson
Norfolk, England

To the Editor:

Diana Price's excellent article on the Tudor Rose theory seems to demolish fairly completely the theory that the third Earl of Southampton was the son of Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Oxford. (Elizabeth Sears was the latest to propose this.) Most useful is the diagram showing the crown and various

coronets which explains perfectly the curious signature sometimes adopted by the Earl of Oxford.

Sincerely,
Francis Edwards, S.J., FSA
London, England

To the Editor:

In full support of the noetic article by Diana Price on the Tudor Rose theory:

If Southampton had been the illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth and Edward de Vere, would they have chosen, as the foster-father of their child, a Catholic nobleman who had recently been imprisoned by the Queen for his complicity in a plot to dethrone her?

Why did Southampton so facially resemble Countess Southampton (when they were both in “the April of their prime”) if he was not her son?

Most tellingly, would Edward de Vere have christened his legitimate son “Henry” (later 18th Earl of Oxford) when his “supposed” illegitimate son Henry Southampton was still living? To have done so would have been most irreligious. Edward de Vere was most religious, witness: “...he (Edward de Vere) was holy and Religious the Chapels and Churches he did frequent... and the bountie which Religion and Learning daily tooke from him, are Trumpets so loude, that all eares know them...”

Sincerely,
Derran K. Charlton
South Yorkshire, England

To the Editor:

In “A Fresh Look at the Tudor Rose Theory” (ER, vol. 4, no. 2), Diana Price has proved herself a most admirably thorough sleuth in her determination to disprove the finding that Southampton was the son of Queen Elizabeth and Oxford. That the youth was the fruit of such a union is a proposition I resisted for years for obvious reasons and have come to accept only because I have felt I had no choice. No other scenario of which I have heard accommodates the facts in the case.

Ms. Price, it seems to me, has scored a success in nearly all the challenges she has mounted to what she calls “The Tudor Rose Theory.” The trouble is that these are all focused on subordinate issues while the central considerations are overlooked until at the end she touches on one and then only to shy away from it. Her argument, unless I mistake her, comes down to denying the possibility of Elizabeth’s concealing a pregnancy during the crucial period and of her being able to bear a child in secret. My response to that is: let her think again. Plenty of women, I do not doubt, have succeeded in carrying out what Ms. Price maintains the Queen could not have. Given the costumes available

to a dame of the period and the sealing of gossipy mouths by the knowledge of what indiscretion could cost, I find no difficulty in believing that the Queen could have borne a child with only a few persons in on it. My mother, I might add, had a print of a full length portrait originally designated as of Queen Elizabeth with the subject looking suspiciously full in the midriff, which she told me was later labeled as simply that of a lady of the Court. (Elizabeth's pregnancy actually seems to be broadly hinted at in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* i.e., of One Vere, when a reference is made out of the blue, to Sylvia's "passing deformity," the consequence of Valentine's "present folly." Please see *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (pp. 521-24). We may recall recent reports of the high-school couple in Delaware in which the young girl carried her pregnancy to full term and gave birth to an infant son in a motel without anyone's ever having been the wiser but for the discovery of the baby in a collection of trash, allegedly done to death by the young father.

How Ms. Price accounts for the terms in which the young poet addresses the young friend of the Sonnets is unclear to me. Yet this is of key significance. I have been unable to explain it except on the basis of the latter's having been either the poet's homosexual lover or his son and, somehow, his sovereign—and the evidence against the former interpretation is overwhelming and conclusive. But, given these alternatives, the poet was faced by a terrible dilemma. Fully expecting the fair youth to be identified as Southampton, presumably in a dedication similar to those of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*—"Thy name from hence immortal life shall have"—he could not possibly allow the youth to be seen by posterity as his catamite, while acknowledging him as his son would have been proscribed under the full power of the Crown. His solution? Sonnet 20, making it explicit that the young man, the object of both the poet's idolatry and censure, could not have been either. Thus, we are left with what A.L. Rowse calls "the greatest puzzle in the history of English literature." If, as I am constrained to believe—much against my will, I may repeat—that the identification of Shakespeare as Oxford must lead to that of the young friend of the Sonnets as the son of Oxford and Elizabeth, then the need for dissimulation of Oxford's authorship of Shakespeare's works was absolutely imperative. It was not simply a matter of preserving the reputations of the Queen and those around her, which would be recognized in the plays were these attributed to an insider at Court, though given the unsparing treatment of some of them this would be reason enough. What was at stake in the identity of the poet-dramatist was the succession to the throne of the United Kingdom. For all I know, this may be dynamite even today.

Let us come now to the events of June 24, 1604, which are of critical importance to our story. On that date, Oxford died and King James had the Earl of Southampton clapped in the Tower of London, from which James had released him following Elizabeth's death in 1603. Ms. Price would have us believe the two events were merely coincidental. That is surely incredible. She

asserts that if Robert Cecil and the King considered that Southampton had a claim to the throne as Elizabeth's heir, they would have left the young Earl in the Tower in 1603 or—Ms. Price shockingly attributing to Cecil and James a capacity for cold-blooded savagery—had him killed. Surely the facts are that James had Oxford's assurance in 1603 that Southampton would not claim the throne and could be safely freed, but that when Oxford died James feared that with his restraining hand withdrawn, Southampton might indeed make a bid for the throne. In his *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, G.P.V. Akrigg writes that "According to the French Ambassador, King James had gone into a complete panic and could not sleep that night even though he had a guard of Scots around his quarters. Presumably to protect his heir he sent orders to Prince Henry that he was not to stir from his chambers." Southampton was released the next day, no doubt upon his assurance that the King was entirely safe in having him at large.

The only explanation I can find is that, as Elizabeth's son, Southampton would indeed, certainly in his own view, have had a rightful claim to the Crown, upon which he might be expected to act, while to me this explanation accords with what we may deduce of the relations of Oxford, Elizabeth and Southampton from Shakespeare's works. I do not know how otherwise the circumstances known to us may be accounted for.

A final point. On the first page of her article, Ms. Price asserts that, were Southampton Oxford's son, Oxford in promoting his marriage with his daughter Elizabeth would have been encouraging incest unless, as proponents of the theory of the Tudor Rose have to argue, Elizabeth had come into being by Burghley's having "impregnated his daughter Anne." Let me refer her to *TMWS*, pp. 333-34, in which it will be seen that we have no reason at all to believe that Oxford favored a match between Southampton and Elizabeth.

Sincerely,
Charlton Ogburn
Beaufort, South Carolina

Diana Price responds: It is dismaying to find myself in disagreement with a position endorsed by Charlton Ogburn, whose book first interested me in the Shakespeare authorship issue. Yet his defense of the Tudor Rose theory does not squarely confront the factual objections, much less overcome them.

Mr. Ogburn may have "no difficulty in believing that the Queen could have borne a child with only a few persons in on it," but I do. An unnoticed pregnancy is not only unusual, but for a monarch with relatively little privacy, it is highly unlikely. Mr. Ogburn expressed confidence that "the sealing of gossipy mouths" could be ensured "by the knowledge of what indiscretion could cost" (a suggestion, by the way, that hints at the

same sort of “cold-blooded savagery” that Mr. Ogburn found so outrageous in my estimation of the Machiavellian Robert Cecil). A recurring topic of court gossip, both in England and on the continent, was speculation on Elizabeth’s supposed pregnancies and illegitimate offspring. As far as we know, such gossip was without foundation, yet we are to believe that when there *was* some foundation, all the gossips suddenly went mum.

Who were all these potential gossips? Proponents of the theory have yet to comb the historical archives to catalogue Elizabeth’s activities and personal interactions during the last half of her alleged pregnancy. What evidence shows that access to Elizabeth was restricted to those few who were “in the know”? Were documented personal interactions with non-insiders, such as the French ambassador and low-level courtiers, such as one of the Talbot boys, fabricated? If not, how was concealment possible in each circumstance? How can the Tudor Rose theory have any credibility when the critical assumptions on which it rests are based on mis-used secondhand evidence and an absence of primary research?

Mr. Ogburn claims that I focused “on subordinate issues while the central considerations are overlooked” until the end of the article. Is Mr. Ogburn seriously suggesting that the alleged royal birth of Southampton is a subordinate issue? Surely it is *the* central consideration. Mr. Ogburn argues that Elizabeth *could have* concealed her pregnancy — even in the presence of the French ambassador and minor courtiers — by wearing a dress designed for that purpose. Not only is the supposition questionable, it leaves many other objections unanswered. Mr. Ogburn speculates on Elizabeth’s maternity disguise, yet he has himself been justifiably critical of reliance on conjecture when no facts exist, or worse, when known facts refute the case as argued. Similarly, his interpretation of the events of June 24, 1604 remains mere speculation.

With respect to the De Vere-Southampton betrothal, Mr. Ogburn points out that he is on record as having no reason “to believe that Oxford favored a match between Southampton and Elizabeth.” But the chief promoter of the Tudor Rose theory believes otherwise. Mrs. Sears wrote that “Oxford would have realized at this point that a marriage to William Cecil’s daughter/granddaughter would strengthen Southampton’s position as heir to the throne. . . . Oxford must have regarded this marriage as a guarantee of Southampton’s future inheritance of the Crown” (50).

Mr. Ogburn asks how I would explain the poet’s address to the Fair Youth of the Sonnets, but he limits my choices to two. Either the Fair Youth was the poet’s gay lover, or he was Oxford’s son by the Queen. Mr. Ogburn’s proposal strikes me as an example of the false dichotomy, a logical fallacy by which various legitimate possibilities in the spectrum are eliminated from consideration. And if a few historical facts render Mr. Ogburn’s preferred option untenable, then is he not obliged either to modify

his hypothesis or to discard it in favor of another?

Mr. Ogburn began by stating that he reluctantly accepted the Tudor Rose theory because he “had no choice.” No other explanations or interpretations would serve. Scholars have struggled for years to squeeze convincing interpretations out of the Sonnets, but those who have proposed unifying theories necessarily begin to speculate where the biographical records leave off. It may be that many more facts about the man who wrote the Sonnets will need to come to light before any interpretation can be proposed with confidence.

To the Editor:

All Oxfordians were originally Stratfordians. It was only the recognition of one or more non sequiturs in the Shakespeare story of authorship that caused us to search for an alternative author. Our questioning attitude, however, cannot be handily dropped when we study the life and works from the Oxfordian viewpoint and we are not serving the cause of Edward de Vere when we allow preconceived beliefs to interfere with examining new discoveries and new ideas. We do not have to recant our ideas of the universe like Galileo, nor will we be burned at the stake like Giordano Bruno who refused to recant. Having progressed beyond this kind of censorship, are we not free to report what we have found and believe to be true? There is one fact that must be looked at honestly and fairly. While other members of the nobility and gentry were published posthumously, Oxford was not. His records were destroyed and there has been an obvious cover-up for four hundred years. He states clearly that he was “Tongue Tied by authority” (Sonnet 66). This silence should be recognized as a non sequitur and dealt with accordingly.

Primary sources are admittedly important, but for the reign of Elizabeth I, there is a decided paucity of information. There was little that escaped William Cecil’s censorship. While it was customary for the “pipe roll” records for any given year of a sovereign’s reign to fill three large rooms, it is significant that in one year of the Regnum Cecileanum there were only nine pipe rolls; barely enough to fill a corner of one small room. This was not pruning of excess information, but a great lopping off, a comprehensive censorship.

Therefore, while primary sources are not always available, there were many veiled clues by writers using allegory and painters using Renaissance *impres*a or portrait devices to convey messages that could not be expressed otherwise. There was a British Secrets Act and a statute forbidding portrayal of high officials on stage. Allegory was used by most writers in Elizabethan times and it is naive to read Shakespeare, or anyone else in the Elizabethan era, in any way other than with double meanings. Oxford, with his ability to think and write in several languages at once, was the supreme master of double *entendre* and multiple meanings. To see him as less resourceful is to deny him one facet of his genius.

Ms. Price cites in her article, "A Fresh Look at the Tudor Rose Theory," Charlotte Stopes' footnote on page 2 of Chapter one of her Southampton biography:

It has always been said he (Southampton) was "the second son," but there is no authority for that. The error must have begun in confusing the second with the first Henry (i.e., 2nd earl).

The second sentence above was not cited by Ms. Price, nor does she quote an important item from Mrs. Stopes's preface that might be relevant to Oxfordian research.

From a plain statement of facts, however, we may sometimes secure legitimate inferences.

While the second part of the footnote quoted above seems to be one of those "inferences," it may be wrong in this case. In the small community that Tichfield was in the 16th Century, the word would have spread freely from the manor to the town that there had been two sons in the family with an unexplained disappearance of the first. Although there was no record of the burial of the first and no record of the birth of the second boy, such things would have been common gossip in the local pub.

Mrs. Stopes was somewhat handicapped by not having access to letters and papers that were still in private hands when she was researching Southampton. Among these were the Losely Letters which were turned over to the Castle Hill Museum in Guildford after World War II and later bought by the Folger Library. Unfortunately, these letters have been edited and omit what might have been crucial evidence. One of these, a letter from the Second Earl of Southampton to Sir William More of Losely, announcing the birth of a boy on October 6, 1573, has a blank section where the child's name might have been given. (Was this deliberately excised, a possible non sequitur?)

However, the Second Earl of Southampton's original will was surprisingly available for my personal examination at the Ancient Records Office in Winchester, to which Mrs. Stopes did not seem to have had access.

Two important items were added to the Earl's will after the main portion had been drawn up so self-servingly by his Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Thomas Dymocke. Dymocke had been trained at the Inns of Court, and was descended from a long line of Sovereign's Champions, at least as far back as Richard II. His uncle, Sir Edward Dymocke, had been Elizabeth's Ceremonial Champion at her Coronation. Thomas, who would eventually inherit the Barony, was acting as a servant (a non sequitur?). Ostensibly, there was not only a rift (Dymocke-made) between the Earl and his Countess Mary, but also a split with his in-laws. Lord and Lady Montague. Curiously, the first codicil added to the will was a gift to Lord Montague, "in token of perfect love and charitie betweene us" (non sequitur?).

The second addition provided for the education, until the age of twenty-one, of "William, my beggar boye." For this there may be an explana-

tion. If the boy, born on October 6th, 1573, was named for the Earl's devoted, Sir William More, who for many months had acted as the Earl's guardian/warder when the Earl was first released from the Tower, this clause would have been added to ensure that his own ousted child would be saved from ignorance and desperate poverty. To quote Mrs. Stopes, "From a plain statement of facts, however, we may sometimes secure legitimate inferences." More non sequiturs in relation to these facts may lend them more weight!

If we return to Mrs. Stopes' book, we can find on page 9 more material of interest which she does not recognize as odd. She quotes a letter from the then widowed Countess of Southampton.

...Mr. Dymocke voyde of either wytte, abelity, or honesty to dischargd the same (i.e., the will) doth so vexee me as in troth my Lord I am not able to expresse. How to better yt I know no menes to her Majestie but by your menes to her to have consideracion of the man, and *great matters that resteth in his hands unaccomptable but by Her prerogative*, which I trust by your Lordship's menes to procure for the *good of the child*. (Italics added)

Dymocke has been given charge of "great matters" for the Queen (while ostensibly acting as a servant. Non sequitur!). On page 12, another letter from the Countess to Leicester speaks in the same vein of "the child" as opposed to "my child" or "my son."

Yf possibly yt may be, which truly my Lord can never be (without great hinderance to *the child*) except such travell (i.e., travail) and paynes which may ever be taken *for yt*, as I know none can or will do, but he who is tyed to *the child* both in natur and kynship. That your Lordship shall judge my Lord, my father his meaning or myne, is not to make an *undutyfull motion to her Majestie or her state*.

The Countess speaks of "the child," refers to "yt," "great matters" and her duty to the Queen. (Non sequiturs?).

Ben Jonson speaks of matters in "High Places" in *Bartholmew Fair*, a play written in 1596, but *never performed until 1614*. (A non sequitur?) Act I, scene vi:

Zeal-of-the-land-Busy:... Now pig is a meat, and meat that is nourishing, and may be longed for, and so consequently eaten; it may be eaten: very exceeding well eaten. But in the *Fair*, and as a *Barthol'mew-pig* it cannot be eaten, for the very calling it a *Barthol'mew pig* it cannot be eaten, it cannot be eaten, for the very calling it a *Barthol'mew pig* and to eat it so, is a spice of *idolatry*, and you make the *Fair* no better than *one of the high places*. This I take it is the state of the question. *A High place*. (Italics added)

In *Henry IV 2*, II.iv.250, Doll Tearsheet addresses Falstaff as "Thou whoreson little tidy Bartholmew Boar pig" and "Idolatry" has echoes of Sonnet 105.

Let not my love be call'd idolatrie
 Nor my beloved an Idoll show
 Since all alike my songs and praises be
 To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
 Kinde is my love today, tomorrow kinde
 Still constant in a wondrous excellence,
 Therefore my verse to constancie confin'd
 One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
 Faire, Kinde, and true, is all my argument.
 Faire, Kinde, and true, varying to other words,
 And in this change is my invention spent.
 Three theams in one, which wondrous scope affords.

Faire, Kinde, and true, have often liv'd alone.
 Which three till now, never kept seate in one.

The word "kind" has several meanings. Kind is German for child; it also has a now-obsolete usage meaning "sprung" or "begotten." Kine is an old word for "cattle" and in the cattle family is "Ox." One may claim this is far fetched, but the Renaissance mind worked this way. Hamlet says of Claudius: "A little less than *kind* and more than *kin*."

....Shakespeare was not the only poet who dedicated works to Southampton. Thomas Nashe wrote the following for his *Choice of Valentines*, which was found in an unpublished manuscript.

A prelude upon the name of
 Henry Wriothesley Earl of
 Southampton
 Ever
 Whoso beholds this leafe, therein shall reade
 A faithful subjects name, he shall indeede
 The grey-eyde morne in noontide clowdes may steep
 But traytor and his name shall never meete.
 Never.

....Oxford repeatedly expresses his pride in Southampton as the heir to the Crown. The Sonnets title page shows a device, or *impresa*, of a child wearing the Prince of Wales plumes at the top center. At the bottom are two hares (heirs). Above the first Sonnet is another heading with an *impresa* of two birds at the top, left and right (Phoenix and Turtle Dove) with an urn in the center. And finally, the portrait of the Earl of Southampton in the Tower is teeming with *impresa*, which would require a complete paper by itself.

Unlike Stratfordians, Oxfordians have a wealth of material to research. We must take advantage of our authorial view to search with open minds, no matter where it leads us. There must have been important reasons to hide the true authorship for four hundred years. Had it been a matter of "convention," Oxford's works would have been published under his own name

posthumously. There had to be a serious reason to hide him behind a pen name. Along with the obvious non sequitur of his *not* being given recognition, there is also the change in his combined *Crown and coronet* signature after Queen Elizabeth's death. The entire signature pictures a crown, the top part includes the coronet and Oxford is making a visual double entendre. The signature is really a Renaissance impresa. Obviously, it was critically important for him to discontinue its use after the Queen died, which is definitely another non sequitur.

Two final points: one is that on page 8 of Ms. Price's article, she mentions that "the death of Charles IX threw Anglo-French relations into fresh confusion. His death destabilized the marriage negotiations with the Duc D'Alençon..." Actually, she had been negotiating with the Duc *D'Anjou*, who, by the death of his brother, had become King of France (Henri III). Elizabeth could no longer play the game with Anjou and really was in a dilemma. The Duc D'Alençon was only 16 years old and it looked a little foolish to pursue him as a consort, but as there was no alternative, she finally did renew the French negotiations with a boy who was almost young enough to be her grandson. Of course, it was only a political ploy, but it worked for quite a few years, until Elizabeth was 54 and Alençon was dead. *Courtships of Queen Elizabeth*, by Martin Hume (MacMillan, NY 1896).

The other point is in reference to the interpretation of the Peyton report; it *did* indeed refer to Oxford, but Ms. Price skirts the issue it presents. It opens up a can of "Verma" that might lead to a revelation re "Ver sacrum."

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Sears
Somerville, Massachusetts

Diana Price responds: The debate over the Tudor Rose theory seems to be as much about critical thinking as it is about the lineage of Henry Wriothesley. Proponents of the theory have relied almost exclusively on literary interpretations, rather than hard facts, to build their case. One of my objectives in writing the article was to show that the theory had never been properly vetted against the existing historical documentation, even though it had gained uncritical acceptance in certain circles. I attempted to do a small portion of the vetting, and the evidence that I found, in my view, disproved the case as argued in Elisabeth Sears's *Shakespeare and the Tudor Rose*.

Mrs. Sears has now submitted her response, but nowhere has she confronted the challenges to the fundamental assumptions on which she based her case. Her theory hinges on the hypothesis that Queen Elizabeth had a baby in May/June 1574. But historical evidence shows that Elizabeth had no opportunity to carry or deliver the baby. I believe I also showed that related assumptions, e.g. that Oxford viewed himself as the royal consort;

that there was a second Southampton son; or that Southampton was viewed as a threat to James I, were based on mis-readings or inadequate evidence. Surely the burden is now on proponents of the theory to show why the evidence I presented is inadequate to support my conclusions, or to introduce new facts in support of their hypothesis that can be reconciled against the contradictory evidence.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Sears has ignored the factual impediments and reiterated her interpretations of the Shakespeare canon and a few documents, all of which are subject to other interpretations. Mrs. Sears might pile hundreds more pages of interpretations onto her theory, but if the underlying assumptions are proven to be factually untenable, no amount of literary interpretations or conjecture will make them tenable.

My article was critical of inaccuracies, misquotations, and lack of primary research in *Shakespeare and the Tudor Rose*. More such errors and gaps are found in Mrs. Sears's response. Some errors appear to be merely careless. For example, she misquotes her own book (56), confusing Thomas Powell's published dedication to Southampton for *A Welch Bayte to Spare Provender* of 1603, with Nashe's unpublished dedication to "Lord S" for *Choise of Valentines*. She misquotes a line from *Hamlet* (I.ii.65). In a final point, she writes that it was only when Charles IX died that d'Alençon was introduced as an alternative marriage candidate. Relying on historian Martin Hume, Mrs. Sears wrote, "Actually she had been negotiating with the Duc D'Anjou." But the negotiations with D'Anjou gave way to negotiations with d'Alençon over a year before Charles IX died. Fénelon "broached the subject" in March 1573. The following September, d'Alençon wrote to apologize to Elizabeth for missing their intended rendezvous at Dover; he also sent her a ring as a "love token" (Hume, 170-5).

Other errors show an absence of basic research. For example, Mrs. Sears cited the printer's ornamentation appearing on two pages of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. According to Mrs. Sears, Oxford:

repeatedly expresses his pride in Southampton as the heir to the Crown. The Sonnets title page shows a device, or impresa, of a child wearing the Prince of Wales plumes at the top center. At the bottom are two hares (heirs). Above the first Sonnet is another heading with an impresa of two birds at the top, left and right (Phoenix and Turtle Dove) with an urn in the center.

Mrs. Sears is pointing to the ornaments in the 1609 edition of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* as iconography using Tudor Rose motifs. This is interpretative nonsense.

If Mrs. Sears is suggesting that the edition was designed with a wink at Southampton's royal lineage, how does she explain the presence of the same artwork on any number of other books published before and after 1609? The ornament with the hares appears on the title pages for *A Mad*

World My Masters (1608), *The Merry Devils of Edmonton* (1608), and in Jonson's 1616 *Workes* over the title *Catiline*. The second ornament featuring the two birds appears in George Chapman's *An humorous days mirth* (1599) and *The Gentleman Usher* (1606), and in *Histrion-Mastix* (1610), among others. Obviously, these ornaments were the printers' clip-art, pulled from regular stock. Yet Mrs. Sears interprets them as specifically symbolic of the Tudor Rose themes that she finds in *Shake-speares Sonnets*. It is difficult to escape the inference that Mrs. Sears is prone to reading meaning into anything supporting her theory, while avoiding the critical analysis that might compromise such "evidence."

The errors in both Mrs. Sears's book and rebuttal cannot inspire confidence, but they pale beside her fundamental error of ignoring the historical evidence that disproves her hypothesis. Chauncey Sanders, the author of *An Introduction to Research in English Literary History* (Macmillan, 1952) offered sobering advice to any student who proposes a new interpretation to a work of literature (228-9):

Let him amass all the evidence he can find. Let him set down, in orderly fashion, all the arguments in favor of his interpretation, and then, with equal or greater scrupulousness, all those against. Let him study the evidence, giving full value to every argument; for it may very well happen that a single bit of *contra* evidence will make the piling up of *pro* arguments like the adding together of zeros: whether there are twelve or twenty, the total is still zero. Having assured himself that he has a case, let the student then present his hypothesis, not as a revolutionary discovery that must supplant the quaint notions of his predecessors, but as a tentative suggestion for the consideration of those who may be able to bring further evidence to bear on the matter.

The founders of The Shakespeare Fellowship, among them Sir George Greenwood and J. Thomas Looney, clearly respected the critical method. In their 1922 statement of purpose, they expressed a "desire to see the principles of scientific historical criticism applied to the problem of Shakespearean authorship." It does seem that Mrs. Sears and her followers have gone off in the opposite direction.

A scientific method requires us to revise or discard a hypothesis when it is contradicted by documentary evidence, no matter how abundantly the theory may appear to be corroborated by literary interpretations. If proponents of the Tudor Rose theory do not accept that basic tenet of critical thinking, it is probably pointless for those who are skeptical to argue further.