



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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A 1578 Poem about de Vere's Trip to Italy

“A Letter written by a yonge gentilwoman and sent to her husband vnawares¹ (by a freend of hers) into Italy”²

Imagine³ when these blurred lines, thus scribled out of frame⁴,
Shall come before thy careles⁵ eyes, for thee to read the same:
To bee⁶ through no default of pen, or els through prowde disdayne,⁷
But only through surpassing greefe,⁸ which did the Author payne.

Whose quiuring hand could haue no stay, this carful⁹ bil¹⁰ to write
Through flushing teares¹¹ distilling fast, whilst shee did it indite:¹²
Which teares perhaps may haue some force (if thou no tigre bée¹³),
And mollifie thy stony hart,¹⁴ to haue remorse¹⁵ on mée.

Ah perjurde¹⁶ wight reclaime¹⁷ thy selfe, and saue thy louing mate,¹⁸
Whom thou hast left beclogged¹⁹ now, in most vnhappy state²⁰:
(Ay mee poore wench) what luckles star²¹? what frowning god²² aboute?
What hellish hag²³? what furious fate²⁴ hath changd our former loue?

Are wée debarde our wonted ioyes? shall wée no more embrace?
Wilt thou my deare in country strang, ensue²⁵ *Eneas* race:
Italians send my louer home, hée is no *Germanyne* borne,²⁶
Unles ye welcome him because hée leaues mée thus forlorne.

As earst ye did *Anchises* sonne,²⁷ the founder of your soyle,
Who falsely fled from Carthage Quéene, reléeuer of his toyle²⁸:
Oh send him to *Bryttannia* Coastes, vnto his trusty féere,²⁹
That shee may view his cumly corps,³⁰ whom shée estes so deere:

Where wee may once againe renue, our late surpassed³¹ dayes,
Which then were spent with kisses sweet, & other wanton playes:³²
But all in vayne (forgiue thy thrall,³³ if shee do iudge awrong),
Thou canst not want of dainty Trulles³⁴ *Italian* Dames among.

This only now I speake by gesse, but if it happen true,
Suppose that thou hast seene the sword, that mee thy Louer slue:
Perchance through time so merrily with dallying³⁵ damsels spent,
Thou standst in doubt & wilte enquire from whom these lines were sent:

If so, remember first of all, if thou hast any spowse,
Remember when, to whom and why, thou earst hast plited vowes,
Remember who esteemes thee best, and who bewayles thy flight,
Minde her to whom for loyalty thou falshood doost requight.

(Continued on page 27)

by Richard M. Waugaman, MD

To my knowledge, this article is the first to link this anonymous 1578 poem with Edward de Vere. A detailed examination of the poem and its literary allusions suggests that it was written by de Vere. Definitive proof of this attribution must await the accumulation of further evidence. Even if de Vere was not its author, I maintain that it was written with him in mind.¹ Once that hypothesis is considered, possible connections with de Vere abound. It was published two years after he returned from his fourteen months on the continent—most of that time having been spent in Italy.²

The poem was published in Thomas Proctor's 1578 *A Gorgious gallery, of gallant inventions Garnished and decked with divers dayntie devises, right delicate and delightfull, to recreate eche modest minde withall, first framed and fashioned in sundry forms by divers worthy workemen of late dayes*. It was published two years after the first edition of *Paradise of Daintie Devises*, which contained several poems signed by de Vere. Its full title even repeats the phrase “daintie devises” from that earlier title. The actual editorship of *Gorgious gallery* is somewhat obscure, as is that of *Paradise of Daintie Devises*. Hyder E. Rollins³ speculates that Owen Roydon (whose “address” and poem begin the book) was the original compiler, and that Thomas Proctor took it over after Roydon's death. Rollins calls Roydon an experienced compiler of miscellanies of poetry, but considers it strange that Proctor did not show much involvement in printing books. His career after 1584 was obscure.

The collection's original title—*A Handful of Hidden Secrets*—was more

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From the President: The Future of the Oxfordian Movement

Dear Members,

The unification of the two U.S. Oxfordian organizations to become the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship in 2013 has allowed the SOF to focus on larger goals, rather than just the necessary details of our important work in putting out newsletters and journals and arranging conferences. After our unification, we wanted to be more active in forwarding the Oxfordian cause. One of our most significant initiatives has been the Research Grant Program, which we began last year. The purpose of this project is to uncover new evidence relevant to the authorship question. As then President John Hamill said when he announced the program: "One of our primary objectives as an Oxfordian organization is furthering research that will ultimately provide clear evidence that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the author of the works published under the pseudonym 'William Shakespeare.' That is our ultimate goal. Each new piece of evidence is valuable to the resolution of the authorship issue."

The SOF announced the first research grant awards in November 2014. The committee funded three proposals, each of which promises the possibility of exciting new finds to help solve the authorship mystery.

One award was made to Professor Roger Stritmatter, PhD, for research into a recently discovered book that may have been annotated by Edward de Vere. Another award was made to Professor Michael Delahoyde, PhD, for research to be conducted in some northern Italian archives.

John Lavendoski received an award for a project called, "Verona to Milan by Water: The Canals of Northern Italy." This project expands upon previous research by Richard Paul Roe as it examines several historical canal systems which linked the Adige and Po river systems between the 15th and 17th centuries. Field research is being conducted in major and minor archives in Northern Italy with focus on period maps, original engineering documents, and travel, commerce and military records related to both the typical uses of these canal systems and their regulation by local governmental bodies. The project began in December of 2014, and a wealth of pertinent material has already been discovered. Stratfordian scholars have for years scoffed at Shakespeare for thinking that one could travel from Verona to Milan by boat, as described in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, but the Stratfordians may soon be proved wrong.

The SOF hopes to raise \$20,000 this year to fund a new set of grants so that this exciting

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The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to investigating the Shakespeare authorship question and disseminating the evidence that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), is the true author of the poems and plays written under the pseudonym "William Shakespeare."

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship pursues its mission by supporting research, educational and scholarly initiatives, annual conferences, website and social media, and by publishing this Newsletter and two annual scholarly journals, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*.

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship was formed in 2013 when the Shakespeare Oxford Society, founded in 1957, and the Shakespeare Fellowship, founded in 2001, united to form a single organization. Dues, grants and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

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Articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items of interest to the Shakespeare Oxfordian community are welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. As provided in the bylaws, "The conferences, publications, and other educational projects of the Fellowship will be open forums for all aspects of the Oxfordian theory of authorship."

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research into the authorship issue may continue. The SOF Board of Trustees believes so strongly in this program that we have made personal donations totaling over \$2,300. We have already received a few \$1,000 donations from some generous members. But you do not need to be able to donate that amount in order to support this vital effort. Donations of any amount are most welcome. In fact, a large percentage of the donations that the SOF receives each year is the aggregate of the \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 donations that many of our members add on to their membership dues when renewing.

I urge you to make a donation, of whatever size you can afford, to the Research Grant Program, in order to keep up the momentum that we have built with our first year's projects. You can mail a check payable to the SOF to P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466-0083 (please note on the check that it is for the RGP), or donate online at our website at www.ShakespeareOxfordFellowship.Org (click on the word "Donate" on the right-hand side of the menu bar and choose "Research Grant Fund" from the drop-

down menu). If you can't make as large a donation as you would like at this time, you may arrange online to have a set amount charged to your credit card each month. We are challenging a well-funded establishment, but the dollars that you contribute to our cause will be put to most effective use.

I believe that the Research Grant Program, by uncovering valuable evidence related to the authorship question, will help keep the Oxfordian movement going strong well into the future. There is still another way that you can support the movement, and that is by making the SOF one of the beneficiaries of your will or trust. A few years ago, we received a substantial bequest based on a member's decision to leave our organization a percentage of the assets of his estate after other obligations had been met. Likewise, I have recently added the SOF to my own estate plans. This is one of the things that we can all do to ensure that this great endeavor lives on.

Tom Regnier, President

Letters to the Editor

[The following letter recently accompanied an order for a gift membership. – Ed.]

I started my search for the true author of the plays attributed to the name William Shakespeare when I was eleven years old. My mother told me I was old enough to enjoy Charles Lamb's *Tales of Shakespeare*. And I did. My father had told me several times that I asked more questions than any child he had ever known. And he had taught school for a brief time.

My red flag flew when I read that Shakespeare "probably joined a group of traveling players." Pure guesswork, I thought, and refused to accept that explanation. I read all of Marlowe's plays and considered his approach quite different from Shakespeare's. Finally, I heard of Edward de Vere and have followed this research ever since.

I tell you this because my granddaughter has been raised on the truth about Shakespeare. Transferred to London this past summer by her company, she has been meeting substantial opposition to the idea of any Shakespeare but the Stratford man. I have been firing off ammunition to her from your newsletters, but cannot do it alone.

I was so happy about your offer of an introductory membership. The introductory membership is a great idea.

Christine Spindel
Memphis, TN

I would like to thank Robert Prechter for his "Reply to Morse's Critique of the *Sonnets* Dedication Puzzle," which appeared in the last *Newsletter* (Vol. 51, No. 1, Winter 2015, 19-22). I recall reading his two-part article on "The *Sonnets* Dedication Puzzle" when it first appeared in *Shakespeare Matters* (Vol. 4, Nos. 3 and 4, Spring and Summer, 2005). Like Prechter, I tend to be skeptical of cryptographic solutions, but his discovery of the names of several people often associated with the *Sonnets*, seemingly encoded into the dedication, appeared to be very non-random and almost certainly a deliberate contrivance. The detailed analysis in defense of his proposed discovery in his latest article makes it clear to me that he got it right in the first place.

John Shahan
Chairman & CEO, The Shakespeare Authorship
Coalition

Since college, I've always wondered about who "Mr. W.H." could be. Recently, I happened to count the letters and found that there were 144 not counting the "T.T." at the end. For fun, I tried putting them in a 12x12 square. I saw the name "Ben" and dismissed it as a fluke, but the letters "ORIW" going down caught my eye. Even though I went on to trying something else, those letters brought me back to it and I realized you could unscramble them to spell the name "H. Wriotheslie, SH" ("SH" for Southampton, perhaps), which isn't the modern spelling, but matches the "onlie" in the dedication. In the grid below, you can see the following message in the two bolded blocks of contiguous letters: "To H Wriotheslie SH" "And Ben Iohnson." There's an extra "s" in "Wriotheslie" (perhaps it should be "Wriothesslie") and one "n" in "iohnson" is used twice.

This only asks the further question of who the third person is, "The Dark Lady." If this is correct, then I can only guess that she must be disguised as Mr. or

"Mistress Raven" of poem 127. Who this could be, I'll leave for future speculation.

Mark Stahley
St Paul MN

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T O T H E O N L I E B E
G E T T E R O F T H E S
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E T S M R W H A L L H A
P P I N E S S E A N D T
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A D V E N T V R E E R I N
S E T T I N G F O R T H

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From the Editor

It's not often (actually, it's pretty close to never) that we get an article from a "mainstream" academician. A while back one came in from Professor Manfred Weidhorn, who has taught in the English department at Yeshiva University in New York for more than half a century. After looking it over, I emailed Professor Weidhorn, telling him I'd like to run it, but first I wanted to make sure that he knew he'd submitted it to an organization that advocates that the real "Shakespeare" was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, not Will Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon. I also suggested that some of the concerns he raised in his article were (in our view, anyway) easily answered if one considered that someone other than Shakspeare was the true author.

Prof. Weidhorn promptly replied that he was "familiar with the 'heretical' views of your [organization], and I was half aware of how my arguments are providing grist for your mill, and your note made me fully aware. I have no problem with that."

I was especially impressed by what he then said, which (with his kind permission) I reproduce here:

I will now cite *King Lear* by way of clarifying what is going on here. The standard modern (i.e., secular) interpretation of that play is that it is a study in theodicy, with God (disguised as "the gods") on trial and found guilty or AWOL. The minority Christian interpretation, on the other hand,

is that it dramatizes the human condition on the eve of Revelation/Incarnation. That condition is abysmal and lacking any exit. It could be described as a pagan version of negative theology. Having cleared away the rubble of the useless or indifferent gods, mankind is ready to turn to the Truth.

But that turn is made neither by the protagonist nor his author, being left to the historical imagination.

In the same way, my essay dwells on something odd about this genius and leaves us with little to hold on to of his identity, for how could such a person be so indifferent to posterity? Hence, just as the turn to Christianity is made by others, not by [Lear or Shakespeare], so in this case can my conclusion, or rather my puzzlement, be turned to other uses; to wit, a different author. I am not the person to go on that route, but I have no objection to others using my findings to dethrone WS—not being related to him, I have no dog in that fight.

After all, I always tell my students that—shockingly—there IS NO Bible or Constitution, there are only INTERPRETATIONS of Bible and Constitution. So too on WS, people can interpret any way they like so long as they provide evidence. It's what makes the world go round!

Professor Weidhorn's refreshing candor solidified my editorial decision to run his article. You will find "The Real Shakespeare Mystery" on page 12 of this issue.

- Alex McNeil

What's the News?

Ashland Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conference Update

Early registrations for the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship annual conference in Ashland, Oregon, September 24-27, have been so robust that the block of rooms reserved for our group at the historic Ashland Springs Hotel was completely booked as of April 10. A discounted group rate of \$139/night for rooms at the Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites (541-482-8310) is still available for conference attendees, although these lodgings are several miles from the Ashland Springs Hotel and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) theaters.

While no shuttle service is provided by the Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites, program organizers will assist with attendees' personal transportation needs. The Columbia Hotel and the Stratford Inn are alternative lodging choices with comparable room rates located a short distance from the Ashland Springs Hotel. The Bard's Inn and Plaza Inn & Suites are also nearby, but have higher room rates. For further information on available accommodations, see the "Planning Your Trip" option on the OSF website: <https://www.osfashland.org/en/plan-your-visit/visitor-info/accommodations.aspx>

Proposals for papers have been received from several British scholars, including Kevin Gilvary, Alexander Waugh, Dr. Ros Barber, Julia Cleave, and Dr. Heward Wilkinson. In addition, Professors Roger Stritmatter, Michael Delahoyde, Don Rubin, Ren Draya, Wally Hurst, and Helen Gordon, as well as Mark Anderson, Katherine Chiljan, Bonner Cutting, Tom Regnier, James Warren, and Robert Prechter have all proposed papers, insuring that this year's conference will be an extraordinary educational and theatrical experience.

The conference will also include a tour of the Margery Bailey Collection at Southern Oregon University's Hannon Library with an exhibit of their rare editions, including several Shakespeare Folios, Hall's *Chronicle*, Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, *The Works of Ben Jonson*, *The Beaumont and Fletcher Folio*, Camden's *Britannia*, and North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*.

One hundred tickets each for OSF evening productions of *Much Ado about Nothing* (September 24), *Antony and Cleopatra* (September 25), and *Pericles* (September 26) have been reserved for our group. The discounted Conference package of three tickets is \$100; it is available on a first-come, first-served basis, and approximately half of the tickets have already been



purchased. Online SOF group ticket orders for the performances will close when each show sells out, and no later than August 20. The complete program of OSF productions is available here: <https://osfashland.org/>. This year marks the Festival's 80th anniversary, and the third Ashland Shakespeare authorship conference to take place over the past decade. For additional information on registration, tickets, lodging, travel, or local transportation, contact Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net.

To register online:

<http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2015-conference>

Tina Packer and Shakespeare's Women

The *Boston Sunday Globe* of April 19 featured an article about director (and actor) Tina Packer, who has written a new book, *Women of Will: Following the Feminine in Shakespeare's Plays*. In it, Packer argues that Shakespeare's characterization of women changed over time, becoming more fully realized, and that the reason for the change was Shakespeare's falling in love with the "Dark Lady" of the Sonnets. Packer casts her lot with those who believe that the Dark Lady was Emilia Bassano (1569-1645), whose father was a Venetian-born musician in Elizabeth's court, and who was a poet and musician in her own right. Since Shakespeare performed at court, Packer is confident that the two met sometime in the 1590s. It was then that Shakespeare began to portray his female characters "as full human beings with agendas and souls of their own." Prior to that time, Shakespeare's women were "either ferocious, overbearingly assertive, or they are idealized virgins-on-a-pedestal," Packer writes. She further credits her long career as an actor as giving her unique insight into these roles; in 2009 she created a theatrical version of *Women of Will*. "There's nothing like being on the inside," she noted.

Regardless of the validity of some of her views—that the Dark Lady is Bassano (do the Sonnets actually tell us she's dark-skinned, or is she just “dark” in her character and actions?), that Shakespeare met her, that he fell in love with her—Packer deserves much credit for arguing strenuously in her book that Shakespeare's work reflects his life. “I know if I'm writing something, it's always reflecting what was happening in my life,” she remarked.

With which Harvard's Stephen Greenblatt, author of *Will in the World*, concurred. Contacted for the *Globe* article, Greenblatt stated that “The large general principle that Shakespeare's life is in his work, even though it's to some extent an academic heresy, seems to me deeply true.”

Brief Chronicles vol. VI Expected Soon

Volume VI of *Brief Chronicles*, one of the two annual journals published by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, is expected to be available shortly. It will contain ten articles and two reviews. Contributors include: Bernd Brackmann (“Biography, Genius, and Inspiration”); Michael Delahoyde (“Oxford's Early Errors”); Robert Detobel (“Arms and Letters and the Name ‘William Shakespeare’”); Michael Dudley (reviewing *Shakespeare and the Digital World*); Jacob Hughes (“Chaucer Lost and Found in Shakespeare's Histories”); Richard Malim (“Ben Jonson and the Drummond ‘Informations’ And Why It Matters”); James Norwood (“Mark Twain and ‘Shakespeare’: Soul Mates”); Don Rubin (“Sisyphus and the Globe: Turning (on) the Media”); Earl Showerman (“*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Shakespeare's Aristophanic Comedy”); James Warren (“The Use of State Power to Hide Edward de Vere's Authorship of the Works Attributed to ‘William Shake-separe’”); Richard Waugaman (reviewing Scott's *The Model of Poesie*); and Richard Whalen (“Was ‘Shakspere’ Also a Spelling of ‘Shakespeare’? Strat Stats Fail to Prove It”).

Starting this year, hard copies of the SOF journals will be made available on a print-on-demand basis. Persons who desire printed copies must order them separately. Members will be notified as soon as the journals are ready, with details on how to order them. We expect them to be available at a reasonable cost, plus shipping charges. All members will have free access to the online versions of the journals through the SOF website.

Brief Chronicles: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Authorship Studies was founded in 2009. Roger Stritmatter has served as the general editor since its inception. Michael Delahoyde serves as managing editor. The other annual journal published by the SOF is *The Oxfordian*, edited by Chris Pannell. Volume 17 is expected to be available in late summer or early fall.

Richard III Reburied 530 Years Later

The remains of one of England's least popular monarchs were reburied in late March, 530 years after his death, and two and a half years after his skeleton was unearthed. Richard III, who was born in 1452 and took power in 1483, was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field outside the city of Leicester in August 1485. The exact location of his grave was forgotten. However, when a skeleton was unearthed beneath a Leicester municipal parking lot in September 2012, authorities were prompted to do some testing. Comparing DNA from the remains with that of a descendant of Richard's sister, scientists concluded with virtual certainty that the remains were indeed those of the king (the skeleton also showed signs of scoliosis and of severe head wounds, which corroborated the DNA analysis).

Richard's remains were placed in a lead ossuary inside a coffin made of English oak. On March 22, 2015, they were taken in a public procession to the Leicester Cathedral, as crowds lined the streets and many more watched on television. On Thursday, March 26, the funeral service was held, with the Archbishop of Canterbury presiding. The coffin was laid to rest in a brick lined vault adjacent to the altar (Richard III was, of course, a devout Roman Catholic, though he was reburied in an Anglican cathedral.)

The royal family was represented by the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and the Countess of Wessex. Queen Elizabeth II did not attend. She sent a royal message



which appeared in the order of service: “The reinterment of King Richard III is an event of great national significance. Today, we recognize a king who lived through turbulent times and whose Christian faith sustained him in life and death.”



Double Falsehood Now Claimed to Be Shakespeare's

Several news services reported in mid-April that two researchers at the University of Texas at Austin have concluded that William Shakespeare's "unique psychological profile" identifies him as the author of the play *Double Falsehood*.

The play first came to light in 1728, when it was published by Lewis Theobald. Theobald claimed to have used three original manuscripts in putting together the version he published; the manuscripts mysteriously vanished. The question of who really wrote the play has been at issue ever since; some scholars believe it to be an authentic Shakespeare work, while others believe that Theobald himself wrote it in a style imitating Shakespeare.

Now, in a paper published in the academic journal *Psychological Science*, Ryan Boyd and James W. Pennebaker write that they conducted a study in which they examined the texts of fifty-four plays—thirty-three by Shakespeare, nine by John Fletcher (whom they identify as a sometime collaborator of Shakespeare's), and twelve by Theobald himself. They then used computer software to evaluate the works for criteria they had developed that would show each author's "psychological signature." This process is something different from using word counts and other so-called "stylometric" techniques. Boyd and Pennebaker instead examined, among other things, "function words" (pronouns, articles and prepositions), "content categories" (words signifying emotions, family, religion, etc.), and how "categorical" the writing was (whether it indicated "an analytic or formal way of thinking"). They then applied the same process to *Double Falsehood*, and concluded that it identified Shakespeare as the author according to most of their statistical measures (the first three acts were most strongly identified as the work of Shakespeare).

"Honestly, I was surprised to see such a strong signal for Shakespeare showing through in the results," said Boyd. "Going into the research without any real background knowledge, I had just kind of assumed that it was going to be a pretty cut and dry case of a fake Shakespeare play, which would have been really interesting in and of itself."

What is perhaps most interesting about this report is that the work was done not in the University of Texas English or comparative literature departments, but in the psychology department. Ryan Boyd is a PhD candidate in "social/personality psychology," and James W. Pennebaker, his academic advisor, is a Professor of Psychology at Texas. Whether their work will have any immediate impact on the real Shakespeare question remains to be seen, of course. But it is interesting to see



that persons from other academic disciplines are getting involved in the area of authorial attribution.

"I've always held huge admiration for scholars who grapple with literature — there is a great deal of detective work that goes into figuring out who the authors really are 'deep down,' their motivations, their lives, and how these factors are embedded within their work," said Boyd. "We demonstrate with our current work that an incredible amount of this information can be extracted automatically from language."



Crowdsourcing *Hamlet*

[Editor's note: The following article, written by Linda Theil, was originally posted on the SOF website in March 2015.]

Oxfordian researcher [Richard Waugaman, MD](#), and [Brief Chronicles](#) general editor [Roger Stritmatter](#), PhD, met recently with [The Global Hamlet](#) co-founder Nefeli Misuraca, PhD, at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC, to discuss the first crowd-sourced edition of a Shakespeare play. Lisa McAlister of [With Good Cause](#) is handling public relations for the Global Hamlet in the US. After seeing Waugaman's work on the Internet, McAlister contacted him on February 17 to ask him to participate in the project. McAlister wrote:

I am reaching out to invite you to be part of our [Global Hamlet] community as I think you have some valuable insight and opinions to share. A new global edition of Hamlet will be published in 2016 to coincide with the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. This will be the very first crowdsourced edition of a book anywhere. The Global Hamlet invites people from all over the world to contribute by sharing a quote, making a comment or telling a story of how Hamlet is still so relatable in modern society. Where other collective works become a globalarchive, the Global Hamlet will create a globalauthor. Everyone who contributes will receive recognition by being listed in the book as a contributor.

Waugaman agreed and suggested McAlister contact fellow Oxfordians Stritmatter and Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship president Tom Regnier.

McAlister arranged for Waugaman and Stritmatter to meet with co-founder Misuraca. Waugaman reported that during their three-hour lunch on March 3, Misuraca told them about the Global Hamlet project and was enthusiastic in her praise for their work. Waugaman and Stritmatter are enthusiastic about the project; both plan to participate. Stritmatter said:

Dr. Misuraca seems like an ideal person to help lead up this exciting new global Shakespeare initiative. She is clearly committed to the ideal of bringing the play to an international audience, not keeping it locked up in an academic suitcase as an object of scholarly reverence. She has read at least some of the Oxfordian commentary on it, and seems to me fully aware that Oxfordian scholarship has much to contribute to the comprehension of the work itself and understanding of its place in history. It seems like the Global Hamlet initiative will become a major venue for students and scholars to learn about the play in a less restrictive atmosphere than that promoted by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the Folger library, and

the other institutional forces that seem to be committed to the orthodox view of the bard.

Waugaman said:

[T]his is a wonderful instance of the healthy role of the internet in returning Shake-Speare to those who love his works. For far too long, Shakespeare scholars have held a monopoly on a respectable understanding of who wrote these works. They have tried to act as priests, controlling access to who was allowed to write authoritatively on Shake-Speare. It's reminiscent of past eras when the laity was forbidden to read the Bible, and translating it so common people could read it was a capital crime.

I was in college during the 1960s, so the ideals of Global Hamlet remind me of the ideals of "Power to the People." The Stratfordian priests have become corrupted with power, and deserve to be exposed. We need to remember that before the twentieth century there weren't professional Shakespeare scholars in academia, since only the Greek and Latin classics were taught as literature.

It's still too soon to know just how I might be involved in Global Hamlet. For starters, I sent Nefeli my review of Bronson Feldman's book [Hamlet Himself](#). I'm proud of Sigmund Freud's prominent role as an early Oxfordian, and Feldman was the first psychoanalyst I'm aware of who took up Freud's suggestion that we re-examine the works of Shake-Speare from a psychoanalytic perspective, based on a more correct understanding of who wrote them.

Project cofounder Nefeli Misuraca commented:

I was very happy to meet professors Waugaman and Stritmatter during my very successful trip to the US. I found an openness of mind and an attention towards what we are trying to accomplish here at The Global Hamlet that reinforced my idea that inclusion is always the best medicine for a stagnant culture.

While we are experiencing an excess of philology in certain areas of studies—an idea that, in the end, every subject matter should be approached via a scientific standpoint—we are also witnessing a true renaissance in independent studies who try to open new avenues of critical thought.

Professors Waugaman and Stritmatter shared with me their experiences and their ideas with a generosity characteristic of those who believe that research means taking many points of view into consideration. I believe that students and people in general all over the world should be introduced to a variety of theory and approaches, so that they can navigate through complex ideas and authors more proficiently.

Shakespeare in particular, with all his complexities and challenges, is the perfect medium to start an international and trans-critical dialogue. The Global Hamlet wants to be precisely this: the first in a

series of collective classics created by the people, for the people, a platform where everyone can participate under the guidance of expert editors and contribute to the creation of the ultimate Hamlet edition: a snapshot of how this infinite work of art is perceived by the people and influences our times.

Hamlet has created what we now call “the modern man,” it is only fitting that an encyclopedia that wants to produce people’s editions of the major works of the western world would start by annotating, illustrating and also translating this pièce. . . .

Professor Waugaman told me that it would be interesting if we were to participate to each other’s Facebook and Twitter pages. Our community base is rapidly growing (we opened the Facebook page only a couple of months ago) and we are organizing a number of e-events in which your Facebook people could be interested, as well.

The project’s other cofounder, Simone Barillari, PhD, clarified the social media initiative as follows:

The collective annotation will start in the next few days on [our Facebook page](#) through the guidance of an expert editor. Any and all annotations will transfer on the regular website once it will be up and running. In the meantime, we have already started a

collective illustration of Hamlet on our [Pinterest](#) account, with users proposing images taken from the vast existing iconography of the play (drawings, photos, stage designs, paintings and sculptures), and contributing them also through [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). These images will be organized scene by scene and captioned. The idea of launching first on the social media the collective illustration and the collective annotation is aimed to build up a community before the launch of the [web]site.

For more information, contact Global Hamlet public relations director Lisa McAlister at [<pr@globalhamlet.org>](mailto:pr@globalhamlet.org).

Anyone who wishes to participate in the project may begin by interacting with editor Damien Peters on one of the project’s social media pages at:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheGlobalHamlet>
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TheGlobalHamlet>
 Tumblr: <http://theglobalhamlet.tumblr.com/>
 Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/TheGlobalHamlet/>

The Global Hamlet website is projected to open Sept 2015 at <http://www.globalhamlet.org>

Third 2014 SOF Research Grant Announced

In an earlier issue we noted the awarding of the first three Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grants, and announced the names of two of the recipients (Roger Stritmatter and Michael Delahoyde). The name of the third recipient was withheld by request at that time. He is independent researcher **John Lavendoski**. His research project is “Verona to Milan by Water: The Canals of Northern Italy.” Further details on his project may be found in this issue’s “From the President” column on page 2.





It's "Professor" Stritmatter!

In March 2015, Roger Stritmatter was promoted to the rank of Professor of English at Coppin State University in Baltimore, Maryland. In announcing the promotion, University President Mortimer Neufville observed that "Documents in support of your Application make evident your pursuit of academic excellence and teaching effectiveness as exemplified by faculty, peer, and student evaluations."

Stritmatter earned his PhD in comparative literature at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, becoming the first person known to have received a terminal degree on a topic directly related to Shakespeare authorship. His dissertation, *The Marginalia of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible: Providential Discovery, Literary Reasoning, and Historical Consequence*, was published in 2001.

Stritmatter also holds a BA in anthropology and journalism from Evergreen State College and an MA in anthropology from The New School for Social Research. He joined the Coppin State faculty in 2003. He is, of course, the general editor of *Brief Chronicles: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Authorship Studies*. That journal, which he founded in 2009, is now one of the two annual journals published by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. Stritmatter also served for several years as editor of *Shakespeare Matters*, the quarterly newsletter of the Shakespeare Fellowship.

Nominations to Board of Trustees

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Board Nominations Committee has begun the vetting process for candidates for election to the Board of Trustees at the annual membership meeting in September during the conference in Ashland, Oregon. According to the SOF bylaws, nominations to the Board of Trustees are the responsibility of this committee. Nominations to the SOF Board and to the office of President may also be initiated by written petition of at least ten members in good standing, so long as the petition is submitted to the Nominations Committee no less than sixty days before the annual meeting. This year nomination by petition will be closed after July 27, 2015. For further information on the process of Board nominations, consult the SOF bylaws (<http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/>) or email Nominations Committee Chair Bonner Miller Cutting at jandbcutting@comcast.net.

The Nominations Committee is also responsible for nominating a candidate for President. The nominees for three-year terms as Trustees and the nominee for a one-year term as President shall constitute the official slate of Board candidates proposed to the membership. This slate of Board candidates, plus those qualifying petition candidates, will provide short biographical sketches to the Nominations Committee, which will be distributed to SOF members at least thirty days prior to the annual meeting.

If the number of qualified candidates for President or for the Board exceeds the number of expected vacancies, the election for positions will be by mail ballot of the members. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes for President will be deemed elected President. Those candidates receiving the largest number of votes for Trustee will be appointed to three-year term positions on the Board of Trustees. If the number of qualified candidates for President or for the Board does not exceed the number of expected vacancies, those persons so nominated for office may be deemed elected by voice vote at the annual meeting. The results of the election will be posted on the SOF website immediately after the election and reported in the fall *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*.

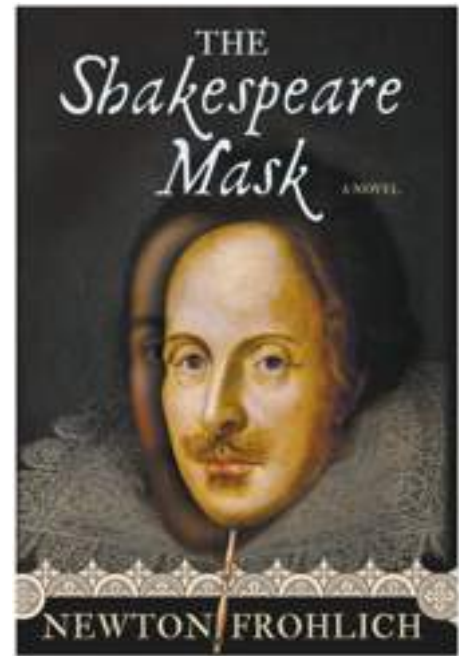
Newton Frohlich's Historical Novel Wins Award

On April 10, 2015, the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) announced that Newton Frohlich's novel about Edward de Vere, *The Shakespeare Mask*, was its 2015 Benjamin Franklin Gold Medal Award Winner in Historical Fiction. In announcing the award, the IPBA described the book as an "intimate novel of the complex man who penned some of the most beloved works written in the English language, then had to hide his authorship behind a mask." The IPBA's annual awards are issued in fifty-five literary categories.

Frohlich also informs us that his book has been picked up by a major publisher in India, and will be published there later this year ("Shakespeare is their favorite author," he reminds us). He is also hopeful that the book will be published in Europe.

Published in the U.S. in 2014, *The Shakespeare Mask* is available in hardback and paperback, and as a Kindle ebook. Further information is available at www.newtonfrohlich.com.

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Book on Delia Bacon to Be Published

Gary Goldstein informs us that Layman Poupard Publishing, a library reference publisher headquartered in South Carolina, is bringing out a book of literary criticism on Delia Bacon in November 2015 with a print run of 325 copies. The price is \$300. Their market is academic libraries. Unfortunately, the advisor for the book is Graham Holderness of the University of Hertfordshire, who savaged Bacon's book, *The Philosophy of the Plays of William Shakspeare Unfolded*, in his chapter in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* (2013). Holderness wrote:

Her argument that the Stratford Shakespeare was, through lack of education and cultural deficiency, in no way up to the job of writing the plays has been comprehensively refuted by generations of scholars, biographers and critics, and is reaffirmed in this volume. (10-11)

In fact, Holderness's concluding sentence utterly dismisses *The Philosophy of the Plays of William Shakspeare Unfolded*: "[I]n reading it as a scholarly treatise, an intellectual argument, a historical narrative, we can only conclude that it remains, in its anguished totality, a scholarship without content, an argument without conclusion, and a history without evidence" (15). Thus, we should not expect a rounded perspective of this pioneering book regarding the Shakespeare authorship issue. On the other hand, Goldstein notes that he was contacted by the publisher to include Elliott Baker's introduction of his edited version of Delia Bacon's book, so there may be a few contributions in the forthcoming book that present her scholarship fairly.



The boards of trustees of the de Vere Society and the SOF recently arranged for their respective Newsletter editors to exchange their publications. I was delighted to receive the April 2015 issue of *The de Vere Society Newsletter* just a few days ago. It's edited by Kevin Gilvary, who also serves as chairman of the DVS. Its articles are well worth reading, including ones by Robert Detobel (making the case that Stratford vicar John Ward's jottings about "Shakespeare" in the 1660s are entirely consistent with the case for Oxford as the true author), Eddi Jolly (exploring the French connections in *Love's Labour's Lost*), Jan Cole (on Arthur Throckmorton [1558-1626], who had connections to both Shakspeare and Oxford, and whose extant diary has never been fully transcribed), and two by Richard Malim (one examining John Benson's use of question marks in the frontispiece of his 1640 edition of the *Sonnets*, and one irreverently examining whether Will Shakspeare was "monorchid").

For information about membership, go to www.deveresociety.co.uk.

-Alex McNeil

The Real Shakespeare Mystery

by Manfred Weidhorn

I

That Shakespeare is an elusive figure has long been a platitude, or a moldy old tale. Certainly, when compared to other creative titans—Dante, Michelangelo, Milton, Bach—he is an enigma, second on this matter only to the completely unknown Homer. The others left a large paper trail about their work, but from Shakespeare we get nothing—no memoirs, no diaries, no notebooks, no essays, no letters, no Boswell. As a result, we are beleaguered with endless controversies about bogus or secondary or insoluble issues—like who really wrote the plays, who is “Mr. W. H.,” what is the significance of his last will and testament, what were his sexual proclivities? Among the more substantive questions are: What were his religious and political views and, especially, how did he react to Galileo’s monumental discoveries in 1610, which for John Donne called “all in doubt”? That cacophony has diverted attention from what is the real, or the greatest, mystery involving Shakespeare: What did he think of his famous creations and their ultimate worth? This question is often touched on by his many biographers, but not pursued to its logical conclusion.

The matter does not seem at first glance problematic. We assume that Shakespeare must have been proud of what he had achieved, if only because of the praise eventually heaped on him by others in his time. As James Shapiro, in studying the year 1599, notes, Shakespeare had become the “most popular and admired dramatist of the age” (327). London bookstalls soon offered separate quartos of five newly published plays, with his name now regularly appearing on the title pages. We have, furthermore, in his one piece of indirect dramatic criticism—Hamlet’s injunction to the players—his lofty idea of the function of theater: to hold the mirror up to nature, to present us with an image of ourselves.

But in the absence of any other explicit words from him, we are left with a few disconcerting facts. Having wrought the perfect coda to his life’s work with the superlative *Tempest*, he more or less ceased major creative effort around 1611-1613. He then retired to his home town, Stratford, enjoying there the returns from real estate and other moneymaking ventures rendered possible by his successful years in the metropolis and by his business acumen. The finality of the retirement, the manner in which he simply laid down his pen when he was at the height of his poetic powers, as though to declare, “I’ve said all that I have to say”—at the age of 47 or 49!—rather than to be repeating himself or writing flops, shows a rare self discipline.

But less intelligible is the fact that in those years of freedom from the pressures of writing and theatrical production he seems to have done nothing to bring out his

works in print. Our curiosity is partly piqued by a gulf which separates the values of another age from ours. We live in an era in which everyone, thanks to the emergent technology of virtually free self-publication, rushes to publish every trivial ejaculation. Shakespeare’s apparent indifference to the fate of his plays is therefore downright bizarre to modern people.

Wrestling with this question, biographers have come up with three plausible explanations: (1) the copyright arrangements made by Shakespeare; (2) the English Renaissance’s dim view of staged plays, and (3) Shakespeare’s modest ambition. The first explanation is the prosaic one that under the legal system of Shakespeare’s day, the playwright had no control over his theatrical material. The texts, which were not intended for publication but were scripts for actors to perform, belonged wholly to the acting company, the King’s Men. It controlled the copyright and decided if and when to publish. Of the first few isolated plays of his that did reach the bookstalls, the title page named the acting company, not the playwright. As a playwright and actor, Shakespeare, though variously owning a tenth or a sixth share, was still in effect but an employee of the company. The situation is strikingly similar not to today’s theater but to movies and television, where scriptwriters are generally unknown or unimportant and where scripts are not usually published.

That disdain which modern intellectuals consequently have for movie and television scriptwriters was paralleled by the disdain of the intellectual class of Shakespeare’s day for the popular theater. Plays written in the vernacular and performed on the popular stage were not regarded serious works of literature. They were scripts for the theater—transitory “meanest things,” “nothing worth.” Bacon dismissed theatrical productions as “toys,” and Sir Thomas Bodley wanted no printed plays “or riffe raffe” in the library he was endowing. When Ben Jonson included his plays in his published *Works*—the first man to do so—he was laughed at for his vanity, as everyone knew that newly written contemporary stage plays, which constituted the bulk of his book, were not “works.” The dedicatory epistle of the Shakespeare First Folio, while paying due homage to the corpus, yet refers to Shakespeare’s plays as “trifles” no less than three times. The snobbishness is nowhere so stridently expressed as by the publisher of the 1609 quarto of *Troilus and Cressida*, who boasted of the purity of that play because, performed only (as he claimed) in private at a law school, it had “never been staled with the stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar...[or] sullied with the smoky breath of the multitude” (Chute 288). This is an onslaught not on plays per se but on both the public theater and on its audience, *hoi polloi*. As Park Honan sums it up, “Plays so far had little status or even monetary worth, and few believed that a drama could be artful or literary” (404).

The matter is clarified if one distinguishes between the literary culture and the new branch of popular culture,

the London theater. Shakespeare started out as an actor and playwright, but then, during the time of plague in 1592-1594, with the theaters closed, he turned to writing narrative poetry. His early reputation as a man of letters, such as it was at that point, rests on two narrative poems which “are the only two of his works for whose publication by printing he appears to have taken direct responsibility” (Wells, *Drama* 31). They were carefully edited by him before being published, with dedicatory epistles. The pair turned out to be his one bid for attention as a serious poet. They were so much part of the literary cultural tradition (Greek mythology and Roman history) that he refers to them as “the first heire of my invention” as though the plays he had already written and staged do not count. And indeed they were immediately and often “quoted, imitated, and reprinted” (Duncan-Jones 230) by cultivated readers. But then, when the theaters reopened, he returned to his first and lasting love, the non-literary popular art of writing plays. He thereby gained sneers from the university wits who saw him as an uneducated plagiarist, not at all as a colleague in the university-based literary culture.

Yet, when all that is said, it should be noted that during the years in which Shakespeare worked in the theater, about 180 plays were in fact published, including some of his own, apparently because the printers grew interested in a new market. Eventually twenty of Shakespeare’s thirty-seven plays appeared in separate quarto editions, seventeen of them in different years during his lifetime. Approximately half of those had Shakespeare’s name on them. None, curiously, came out in the last seven years of his life.

These individual plays were in quarto format—small paperback-like editions, quite different from the large, expensive folios. The latter were typically the format for works of philosophy, theology, science, and non-dramatic literature. The decision to print a popular playwright like Jonson in folio in 1616, the year of Shakespeare’s death, represents a cultural breakthrough. In good part because of Shakespeare’s work, plays began in the 1590s to take on a literary gravity. The “modern sense of ‘authorship’ in the theater” (McMillin 232) was nascent, partly because the playwrights used plots from reputable, serious literary sources and partly because of an “emergent culture of increasing literacy” (Erne 244). Already in 1601 did one literate observer from the university world speak of “the wiser sort” being able to delight in *Hamlet*. As Scott McMillin well says (237), both Jonson and Shakespeare were making plays respectable, but only Jonson cared; Shakespeare, for his part, seemed more interested in acquiring a coat of arms for his family name.

These quartos deepen the mystery, for he showed no interest in their publication, nor in the condition in which they were published. Many of them lack the conventional aids for the reader (which Jonson did provide in his *Works*), like indications of locale, lists of characters, stage

directions, divisions into acts and scenes. Neither were there the usual dedications or epistle to the reader, nor, most curiously, were they proofread to ensure accurate transcripts. The full Shakespeare collection was not published until 1623 in a folio format, a full seven years after his death, when the plays, left by him in a sorry state of disarray, were described by the editors, Heminge and Condell, as “stolen...maimed and deformed...by impostors.” That raises the question where was Shakespeare while all this textual mayhem was going on.

The question becomes pressing when one realizes that the First Folio printed eighteen plays for the first time, many of which—as all biographers note with varying degrees of *frisson*—well might have otherwise disappeared. That is the heart of the mystery about Shakespeare: It is bad enough that he was indifferent, while he was active, about bad versions of his individual plays being printed, but it is worse to contemplate the many plays that were not in print during his lifetime. Nor does he seem to have been concerned about reconciling the differences between the quarto versions and what became the folio texts of the same plays. What was going on in his mind?

The answer may lie in the above distinction between literary and popular culture (highbrow and lowbrow, in the language of a later age), which appears to have been subscribed to by Shakespeare. As a member of the popular culture—one who had tried his hand at the literary culture (with his two narrative poems) and for whatever reason dropped out; he was, according to the biographers, a modest person with modest goals. E. G. Bentley, for example, is a representative scholar when he speaks of Shakespeare’s “indifference to his plays outside the medium of the theater for which they were written...Shakespeare was primarily a man of the theatre; his act of creation reached its fulfillment when his actors presented his plays before an audience” (169, 184). Or in Anthony Holden’s words, “Shakespeare never expected his works for the stage to outlive him; there was no precedent for the publication of a collection of plays” (326). Dennis Kay believes that Shakespeare was mainly concerned “with the miraculous quality of the theatrical...displaying a concern with the immediate” (218). Park Honan puts it another way: “Unlike Ben Jonson, Shakespeare was not a deliberate literary artist”; when he revised, it was for theatrical reasons, not esthetic or literary ones. As long as a scene held the stage in the hour of performance, neither Shakespeare nor his fellows, indifferent to literary posterity, saw a need to improve it” (115). And Stanley Wells chimes in, “He was above all a man of the theatre, writing scripts for performance, not for reading” (*All* 108). When Shakespeare did revise, as with *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*—if indeed it was he who did all or some of the revising—the revision was directed at theatrical performance, not for posterity. D. S. Kastan

(52-53, 78), noting that Shakespeare clearly passed up opportunities to collect his works, pithily concludes that Shakespeare did not choose greatness but had it thrust upon him and that rather than Shakespeare creating the book, it created Shakespeare. These assertions clearly explain the milieu in which Shakespeare first found himself, but they seem to rule out any capacity for growth in his self understanding, if not in understanding the changing attitude to plays.

II

So these three explanations presume to remove the puzzle surrounding Shakespeare. But they thereby raise a larger question: If Shakespeare saw himself as merely a theater person, does not that suggest a defect in his sensibility? Jonathan Bate squarely faces that question: “Did Shakespeare think of himself as a writer who would be read after his death?” The fact that “he did not supervise the publication of his own collected works in his lifetime, as Ben Jonson did his, has led to the widespread belief that Shakespeare was careless of posthumous fame” (407)—a surmise which Bate finds simplistic. But before challenging him on this, we must do some more clearing away.

To the above three theories can be added new conjectures as to why Shakespeare was careless in this

regard, conjectures not entertained by the biographers. One simple solution would be to believe that Shakespeare was indeed eager to publish his works and perhaps even had retired for that purpose but was incapacitated by a lingering illness. There are some indications of ill health late in his life; did the symptoms begin earlier? We do not know how he did spend his last years other than in concerning himself with financial and legal matters and in taking trips to London. But even if partially disabled, could not he have delegated the task to someone else? He had by 1605 become rich enough to do so.

Or perhaps Shakespeare underwent some sort of religious crisis in the wake of which he came to regard his works as so much vanity, somewhat along the lines of Boccaccio’s and Chaucer’s recantations. His every third thought on death and focused on the radiance of eternity, he might have grown indifferent to the fate of his mere earthly works. Yet such a conversion seems out of Shakespeare’s character, there being no traces of a spiritual change in the documents or anticipations of it in the writings.

It is also possible that, without a religious experience as catalyst, he yet may have come to regard his life’s work in a new light. Busy with local matters at home, he may have come to see the accomplishments during the receding years in London as an “insubstantial pageant

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faded.” In Peter Quennell’s words, “He had abandoned them as firmly and conclusively as Prospero rejected his magic lore....He may have regarded his poetic existence as a curious episode now best forgotten” (332). Such a hypothetical change is not novel; various great artists have had their sense of mission displaced by new priorities, if not downright self doubt. It may be that the plans of genius are so ambitious that, though the works of an Ibsen or Tolstoy or Michelangelo (or, in politics, Churchill) seem sufficiently vast and comprehensive to observers, those achievements were as nothing next to what their creators dreamed of doing. This discrepancy accounts for the bitterness and melancholy that overtook those giants in the very twilight years when one would expect satisfaction and serenity. Perhaps Shakespeare had in his mind’s eye a yet greater Lear or Hamlet whom, despite the poet’s wrestling with the recalcitrant material, he was never able to extract from the “failure” we have on stage or on paper.

If these conjectures lead nowhere, we are thrown back onto the three conventional biographers’ excuses cited above. A major problem is that the first two—the contractual arrangements and the perceived ephemerality of stage plays—sit uneasily with the third, Shakespeare’s modesty. For the latter explanation begs the question of whether Shakespeare would have acceded to such conventions if he felt deeply enough that he had created an important series of works. Could not he, a prominent shareholder, have prevailed upon the company to make an exception in his case in view of his many years of service and his great contribution, as both actor and scriptwriter, to their prosperity? Would he not have cited the messy quartos and the unprinted plays as reason enough to set the record straight, once and for all? And if sentiment was not enough of an incentive for the company, could he not, as someone with a keen business sense (not to speak of someone who also had shown a remarkable ability to write speeches of persuasion in his plays), have persuaded them that the success which the plays had had in the theater could be extended into a profitable existence in printed form, especially since they were not now regularly staged? If Shakespeare had cared about the matter, or dwelled on the profit motive, would not his company have relented? And if he did squabble with the company over this issue, would not the rumor mill have picked that up? There is in the documents no sign of any agitation either in Shakespeare’s mind or between him and the company. It is the apparent absence of such conviction, indeed of an artist’s compulsiveness, on Shakespeare’s part, rather than the status of the copyright laws of his day, that exercises the historian’s curiosity and puzzlement.

If these explanations seem unconvincing, the only one left is more troubling—that Shakespeare was not aware of his own achievement. In Samuel Schoenbaum’s words, “Such indifference, in the face of such knowledge, constitutes part of the enigma that his biographers would have somehow to confront” (60). And that is precisely

what they do *not* do. It is amusing to watch the biographers contort themselves with sophistry in order to try to shelter Shakespeare from such an unflattering conclusion. Thus Peter Ackroyd implies that, since the shorter quartos left out “poetic” passages and included vivid stage directions, they were strictly for performance and that the fuller texts, with their “poetry” included, indicated that Shakespeare was writing not just for the contemporary theater audience (329). This, leaving much unanswered, is a weak reed to lean on. Katherine Duncan-Jones says, “As he rose to the summit of his creative powers Shakespeare was becoming anxious about whether his writings...would last” (126). Alas! She provides no indication of how she was able to read his mind. Similar magical mindreading is performed by Dennis Kay when he states that “as time passed, he also seems to have aspired to the status of an author, and to have his scripts published as if they were serious works of art.... He seems to have taken steps to present himself to the public in a more prominent way” (229), but the evidence he offers—the presence of Shakespeare’s name on the title pages of the quartos of the two Richard plays and of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*—is flimsy. Gary O’Connor says that in his will Shakespeare left “sums of money” to Heminge and Condell to attend to an agreed-upon publication of the plays which he was revising in his later years (282). This is an odd remark, given that no such instructions (nor signs of an agreement or of preparation) can be found in the will or elsewhere. Bate, while conceding that the plays missing until their appearance in the Folio, as well as the poor quality of some quartos, suggest that Shakespeare did not care about posterity, asserts that the “good quality and seemingly authorized status of many of the...quartos,” as well as the prominence of Shakespeare’s name on the title page of many of them and the language of the prefatory epistle of the *Troilus and Cressida*, make for a “strong contrary argument” (412-413). That conclusion still leaves a few major questions unanswered.

Above all, do the neutral words of Heminge and Condell—“It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himself had liv’d to have set forth, and overseen his own writings”—prove to be a Cleopatra to these interpreters? Duncan-Jones jumps to the conclusion that perhaps the two men were aware that “Shakespeare planned to emulate Jonson’s example. ... From 1614 onwards, the editing of his own plays, rather than provincial domesticity, may have been his overriding goal and preoccupation” (264). Similarly, Lukas Erne (99) believes that these words imply that Shakespeare would have done the job if he had been alive. Both of these interpretations clearly take liberty with Heminge and Condell’s “if only” daydreams and are backed by no evidence whatsoever about the state of Shakespeare’s mind; “could be” and “may have” are not factual statements. Erne, furthermore, as a strong proponent of the idea that Shakespeare wrote for “stage

and page” and aimed to be “in performance and in print” (244), insists, without proof and in the face of no plays being published in his last seven years, that Shakespeare did take an interest in publishing all his works. Yet he also indicates that Jonson may have begun preparing for his folio as early as 1612; would not Shakespeare have known about this and done something similar if he was so eager to do so? In the end, neither Bate, Erne, Ackroyd, Duncan-Jones, O’Connor, nor Kay, manage to explain the basic puzzle—how does the fact that many plays were left unpublished and, barely, belatedly saved by the Folio long after his death, not to speak of the discordance between quarto and folio texts, harmonize with the notion of a man who cared about posterity?

What conclusion, then, are we left with? It is a common observation that a writer is an unreliable judge of his own work. In the course of composition, he may make hundreds of wise choices at a level of percipience beyond the scope of most other persons; his impressions of the finished work, however, are often idiosyncratic, because he judges it not by what it contains but by what he had meant to put into it. Though most writers tend to overestimate their own works, there have been cases of those scorning the very books which later readers have treasured. Virgil and Kafka, for example, are famous for having left instructions that their works were to be destroyed. No doubt other major writers left such instructions, which, because they were unfortunately carried out, has doomed them to the obscurity they wished for. We marvel that Shakespeare, who had experienced life so intensely, at least in the imagination, left the precious distillate of his observations to the workings of chance. Was he not subject to fears that it would disappear from the face of the earth? Did he not have the writer’s characteristic solicitous concern for his mental progeny that other people have for their biological children? Was he not worried about transience, he who had written so eloquently about the depredations of Time the devourer and had seen that only works of the mind could survive monuments of brass and stone, that only they could eternize? Even if Shakespeare was initially inhibited by the scruples of his era about the popular theater from

taking his career too seriously, he must surely have eventually developed some sense, especially given his large presence and fame at the beginning of the century and given the growing literary respectability of plays, that his dramas were out of the ordinary and were deserving to see print. The Renaissance, we must not forget, was imbued with the supreme value of fame—“that last infirmity of noble mind,” as Milton half regretfully defined it.

Is it possible, therefore, that Shakespeare regarded his plays as merely so many scenarios written to give an acting company in which he had invested money something worthwhile to do; that he put all his psychic powers and heart into the productions of the moment to make them as successful and financially rewarding as possible, but grew indifferent about them when he had done with them; that he regarded his plays as effective because they brought people into the playhouse, not because they contained profound insights; that the plays had no special value to him, were certainly of less worth than the property he had taken pains to accumulate or the coat of arms to earn and purchase; that he, in effect, was a professional, a practical man of the theater with an assigned job to do, rather like a carpenter; that he was not a poet, not like Ben Jonson a creative artist with a mission to publish his writings as “Works” for posterity?

Is it likely that the man who saw so deeply into human nature and caught the heart’s most intimate rhythms, that this man should have dismissed his work as of an age and not for all time, that he should have been blinded by the assumptions and conventions of his age about publicly performed plays and so not seen himself and his creations for what they were? Most tellingly, if his contemporary Ben Jonson, inferior to Shakespeare though he was in imagination and creativity, could see that the climate surrounding plays had changed enough for him to publish his own as serious matter, why could Shakespeare not see that? Could that same Jonson, in his great eulogy, have seen the meaning of Shakespeare’s corpus more clearly than Shakespeare himself? Could Reese be right in asserting that our Shakespeare, concerned only with the stage performances, “was a poor critic of his own work,

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since he never expected it to be submitted to this sort of [literary] examination” (307)?

This is the ultimate mystery about Shakespeare, the one that renders all the others trivial and makes him supremely enigmatic. The conclusion about the meaning of Shakespeare’s detachment is one which the biographers come close to reaching but seem unwilling to draw, perhaps out of fear that it will compromise their hero’s wisdom. The final leap which they are unable to make is to concede that the virtually omniscient Shakespeare had a monumental blind spot: He seems not to have realized that he had won the literary sweepstakes, that he had been projected into the rarified heights inhabited only by Homer and Dante, that because his unique and remarkably theatrical plays would be performed frequently and all over the world, he would become the one writer who reached the largest number of readers/auditors, making him the most famous author on the globe and one of the most esteemed human beings in history. Wise as he was, had he not taken to heart Socrates’s injunction, “Know yourself”?

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The Earl of Oxenford’s Sonnet

Shakespeare! For so long I knew the image,
 But not your person; for you have been kept
 Obscured and obfuscated through the visage
 Of ancient lies. Oh, how my whole heart leapt
 When I through other’s toils found your name!
 It is de Vere, and Oxford, Edward; Earl
 Of erudition, finest wit, the same
 As the Spear-shaker; our worded pearl,
 But not the Poet-Ape. Your glory had
 Too long been laid upon the upstart crow,
 This man of nothing— fronting, homely, sad
 Excuse for all you are and all you know.

For truth is truth, and you do shake a spear;
 The Bard, the Age’s Soul, divine de Vere!

A Sonnet for the Sonnet-Maker, E.O.

You know the beats and rhythms, the iamb
 Which pulses like a crippled-legged walk;
 You, with the force of one who said, “I am
 That I am,” in iambs you will talk
 Of truth and beauty, pain and sorrow, all
 And nothing, touching Heaven and Hell
 In what you speak and say, what will recall
 The void in the beginning, and will tell
 Of voided end, where “Never” ever cries,
 And crowns pass to the undeserving fools
 And great men metamorphose into lies,
 And there we search and find the hidden jewels.
 And there a crown you bear the better part,
 In five-beat lines you tell us of your heart.

—Theresa Rodriguez

[Theresa Rodriguez is author of *Jesus and Eros: Sonnets, Poems and Songs*.]

Oxford's *Spanish Tragedy*: More Hidden Allusions

by C. V. Berney

*The dramas themselves are rich and complex . . .
Many of them are three plays in one . . .*

—Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, *This Star of England*

I was settled into the supple folds of my Moroccan leather armchair, contemplating the sudden onset of turbulence in the column of smoke rising from my meerschaum. The great clock in the hallway had just struck midnight. The world seemed good. I had published my first article on *The Spanish Tragedy*,¹ which had established beyond doubt that it was Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, rather than Thomas Kyd, who had written this piece, one of the most popular plays of the 16th century. My second article² had just been completed: It explored the subtext of that work involving historical figures such as Emperor Charles V, Philip II of Spain, and Don John of Austria—figures active in the Continental politics of the time, mostly members of the Spanish court. I was idly musing about the last act of the *Tragedy*, in which Hieronimo stages a play for the Spanish court as part of his scheme to revenge himself on the murderers of his son, Horatio. As I mused, a feeling of *déjà vu* crept over me—somewhere, sometime, I had read another play in which the hero staged a play as part of a revenge scheme. Of course! *Hamlet*! And the character Hamlet, partly because of his interest and expertise in the theatrical arts, is regarded as perhaps the most autobiographical representation of the author, Edward de Vere, in the canon. But if Hamlet, because of his theatrical bent, is regarded as an Oxford figure, then so too *a fortiori* must Hieronimo, who does not just add “some dozen lines, or sixteen lines,” but writes, produces, directs, and acts in *his* play, *Soliman and Perseda*. And if Hieronimo at some level represents Oxford, there must be a subtext involving other members of the English court. An interesting problem. No need for the cocaine needle tonight!

If Hieronimo represents Oxford, the two female figures fall quickly into place. Bel-imperia, wooed by Andrea, Horatio, and Balthazar, must be Elizabeth, herself wooed by many.³ Isabella, Hieronimo's faithful wife, must correspond to Anne Cecil. In *Hamlet*, Ophelia (an undoubted Anne Cecil figure) dies from grief over the death of her father; in the *Tragedy*, Isabella dies from grief over the murder of her son Horatio. (This generational inversion between the two plays occurs again and again.) Subtextual identification of other characters requires more study.

Lorenzo. Two characters—Lorenzo and Balthazar—are responsible for the murder of Horatio. Lorenzo is the dominant member of this pair. It is Lorenzo who bribes

Bel-imperia's servant Pedringano into naming Horatio as her current lover. It is Lorenzo who commands Pedringano to kill Balthazar's servant Serberine to cover their tracks in Horatio's murder, Lorenzo who alerts the watch so that Pedringano will be arrested, and Lorenzo who promises Pedringano a pardon, and then cruelly withholds it.

If one has read *Leicester's Commonwealth* this *modus operandi* will sound familiar—it is Leicester's. In fact, the *Commonwealth* recounts an incident so strikingly similar to Lorenzo's betrayal of Pedringano that even the orthodox community has picked up on it. It seems that a servant of Leicester's named Gates had been apprehended for a robbery, and appealed to his master for political protection.

Gates, in the Leicester calumny,⁴ is assured of Leicester's protection even after capture, and placated by the Earl with promise of a pardon. When at last no pardon is forthcoming, Gates realizes he has been deceived, and places a full account of his activities and of Leicester's complicity in the hands of an unnamed gentleman. Gates, like Pedringano, is hanged, and Leicester, like Lorenzo, escapes even censure.⁵

Like Gates, Pedringano fears the worst, and sends out a “full account of his activities,” including the murder of Horatio. This letter falls into Hieronimo's hands, and sets him on the path to revenge.

If one accepts Lorenzo as a Leicester figure, it is possible to find a number of corroborating clues, each too slender in itself to be conclusive, but taken as a whole, quite convincing:

- Each is the son of a duke (Lorenzo, the Duke of Castile; Leicester, the Duke of Northumberland).
- Lorenzo claims to have captured the Portuguese prince Balthazar by stopping his horse: “This hand first took his courser by the reins” (1.2.155). Elizabeth made Leicester her Master of Horse at the very beginning of her reign, and he retained the post until his death.
- After the murder of Horatio, Lorenzo sequesters his sister Bel-imperia in the Duke's castle. When Hieronimo comes seeking her, Lorenzo says she's unavailable, but adds, with smooth bonhomie, “But, if it be aught I may inform her of, tell me, Hieronimo, and I'll let her know it. . . . Why so, Hieronimo? Use me” (3.2.59-60, 64). I find this reminiscent of Scott's quasi-fictional Leicester in *Kenilworth*, who comes bustling out of a Council meeting to greet a throng of suppliant hangers-on:

Poynings, good morrow, and how does your wife and fair daughter? Why come they not to court? —Adams, your suit is naught—the Queen will grant no more monopolies—but I may serve you in another matter.⁶

Compare this with how the *Commonwealth* describes Leicester's dealings:

And hereof it followeth that no suit can prevail in Court, be it never so mean, except he first be

made acquainted therewith, and receive not only the thanks, but also be admitted unto a great part of the gain and commodity thereof.⁷

- We have identified Bel-imperia with Elizabeth.

Leicester did not literally imprison Elizabeth in a castle, but the author of *Leicester's Commonwealth* notes that by controlling the people she saw and the information she received, Leicester and his allies effectively isolated the Queen.

Who by their means casting indeed but nets and chains and invisible bands about that person whom most of all he pretendeth to serve, he shutteth up his Prince in a prison most sure, though sweet and senseless.⁸

Balthazar. Lorenzo and Balthazar are allies. Was there a figure in the Elizabethan court with whom Leicester might be thought to be allied? Yes—Leicester and Christopher Hatton often worked together to advance particular causes. They were both identified with the Puritan movement, Hatton presumably from conviction, Leicester from expediency (the French king and the Spanish king had each declined to support his proposed marriage to Elizabeth in return for his promise to restore England to Catholicism). Leicester and Hatton each fulsomely and repeatedly declared his love for the Queen—Hatton from conviction, Leicester probably from expediency, but who can tell? (The fact that Leicester was married three times to women other than Elizabeth makes one wonder.) Some interpersonal dynamic allowed Leicester and Hatton each to accept the other's relationship with Elizabeth, so that when an outsider (such as Oxford, Simier, Alençon or Raleigh) seemed to be gaining favor, they teamed up to oppose the intruder. The index of Hume's *Courtships of Queen Elizabeth* mentions Hatton thirteen times; in only one of these instances is his name not paired with Leicester's.

The historical Hatton and the fictional Balthazar both declare their love in curiously abject, self-deprecating terms. Here is a letter from Hatton to the Queen:

Madam, I find the greatest lack that ever poor wretch sustained. No death, no, not hell, not fear of death shall ever win me of my consent so far to wrong myself again as to be absent from you one day. I lack that I live by.

My heart is full of woe. Would God I were with you but for one hour. I will wash away the faults of these letters with the drops from your poor Lyddes and so enclose them.

Passion overcometh me. I can write no more. Love me: for I love you. Live for ever. Shall I utter this familiar term, farewell? Yea, ten thousand farewells. He speaketh it that most dearly loveth you. I hold you too long. Once

again I crave pardon, and so bid you your poor Lidds, Farewell.

1573, June. Your bondsman everlastingly tied,
CH. HATTON⁹

Compare that with Balthazar's response when he finds that Bel-imperia is not responding to his advances.

. . . But wherefore blot I Bel-imperia's name?
It is my fault, not she, that merits blame.
My feature is not to content her sight,
My words are rude and work her no delight.
The lines I send her are but harsh and ill,
Such as do drop from Pan and Marsyas' quill.
My presents are not of sufficient cost,
And being worthless, all my labour's lost.
Yet might she love me for my valiancy:
Ay, but that's sland' red by captivity.
Yet might she love me to content her sire:
Ay, but her reason masters his desire.
Yet might she love me as her brother's friend
Ay, but her hopes aim at some other end
Yet might she love me to uprear her state
Ay, but perhaps she hopes some nobler mate
Yet might she love me as her beauty's thrall
Ay, but I fear she cannot love at all.¹⁰

The letter is in undistinguished prose, the speech in tightly structured verse, but both seem imbued with a fawning lack of self-regard. It is easy to believe that Oxford was deliberately caricaturing Hatton—he certainly did in *Twelfth Night*, where there is near-universal agreement that Malvolio represents Hatton.

Horatio. The son of Hieronimo and Isabella, Horatio participates in the capture of the Portuguese prince Balthazar, then reports to Bel-imperia on the death of her lover Andrea. They fall in love and arrange a midnight tryst, where they are ambushed by Lorenzo and Balthazar, and Horatio is murdered, in part to clear the way for Balthazar to woo Bel-imperia. His role in the play is thus quickly told, but teasing out his antecedents is more complex. I believe there are three historical figures that are alluded to in some way in the characterization of Horatio: de Vere, Wriothesley, and Oxford's infant son (plus, of course, the nominal allusion to Horatio Vere, Oxford's cousin).

- (1) *Edward de Vere.* In the period 1571-1574 Oxford was in high favor with Elizabeth. The younger Ogburn devotes an entire chapter to this affair.¹¹ We will cite one piece of evidence, a letter Gilbert Talbot (a young member of Parliament) wrote to his father in May 1573:

My Lord of Oxford is lately grown into great credit, for the Queen's Majesty delighteth

more in his personage and his dancing and his valiantness than any other. I think Sussex doth back him all he can. If it were not for his fickle head he would pass any of them shortly.¹²

Oxford was not murdered by Leicester and Hatton, but they consistently plotted against him for many years. Some scholars believe that Leicester suborned servants to arouse Oxford's suspicions against his wife as he was returning from his European tour, and surreptitiously provoked the quarrel with Howard, Arundel and Southwell in 1580-1581. As for Hatton, Ogburn quotes a 1572 letter to him from his friend Edward Dyer advising him on how to proceed with Elizabeth:

Marry, thus much would I advise you to remember, that you use no words of disgrace or reproach towards [Oxford] to any; that he, being the less provoked, may sleep, thinking all safe, while you do awake and attend to your advantages.¹³

Apparently Hatton was not able to refrain completely from invidious references to Oxford (whose family crest featured a *Boar, rampant*), for the next year he wrote to Elizabeth, apparently thanking her for a gift.

God bless you for ever; the branch of the sweetest bush I will wear and bear to my life's end: God witness I feign not. It is a gracious favour most dear and welcome unto me: reserve it to the Sheep, he hath no tooth to bite, where the Boar's tusk may both raze and tear.¹³

For the Horatio-Oxford identification, as in the case of Lorenzo-Leicester, there are corroborative clues in the text whose slenderness is balanced by their specificity.

- In describing the capture of Balthazar, Horatio says "But first my lance did put him from his horse" (1.2.156). This recalls Oxford's victories in jousting tournaments in 1571 and 1581.¹⁴ Horatio's association with a "lance" reminds us of the characters Launce (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*) and Launcelot Gobbo (*The Merchant of Venice*), as well as the pen name Shake-speare.
- In Scene 1.4, Bel-imperia drops her glove, which Horatio picks up and returns. She thanks him for his pains, and Balthazar, hidden, mutters enviously "Signior Horatio stooped in happy time!" The incident has dramatic value—it prepares us for the budding romance between Horatio and Bel-imperia, and it's an early sign of Balthazar's jealousy. It also reminds us of Oxford's famous gift to Elizabeth of

perfumed gloves, presented when he returned from his Continental tour in 1576.¹⁵

- In Scene 2.2, Horatio and Bel-imperia, newly in love, plan their midnight tryst. He asks her to pick the place, and she replies, "thy father's pleasant bower. . . . The court were dangerous, that place is safe." There is a report in Morant's *History of Essex* that Elizabeth visited Edward de Vere at his estate (inherited from his father) in "Havering utte Bower" in 1572.¹⁶ This would have been near the beginning of their *affaire de cœur*, and the secluded location would have protected them from the danger of the court.

Identifying Horatio with Oxford means that Oxford is represented twice, since we have already characterized Hieronimo as an Oxford figure. But this doubling is more the norm than the exception: *vide* Touchstone/Jaques in *As You Like It*, Feste/Fabian in *Twelfth Night*, Valentine/Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and so forth.

- (2) **Henry Wriothesley.** Some Oxfordians believe that Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, was the natural son of Oxford.¹⁷ If this is true, it makes Wriothesley a natural candidate for Horatio, the son of the Oxford figure Hieronimo. Even if it is not true, the dedications to *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are documentary evidence of a strong emotional bond between Oxford and Southampton, and the younger man is widely regarded as the "Fair Youth" of the *Sonnets*. The accepted date for Wriothesley's birth is October 1573,¹⁸ which would make him ten years old in 1583, when I believe the *Tragedy* reached its final form (except for the 1597 "additions"), and nineteen in 1592, when the play was first published.¹⁹ Textual clues for this identification are sparse, the chief indication being the terms, reminiscent of the *Sonnets*,¹⁷ in which Hieronimo addresses his murdered son:

Sweet, lovely rose . . .
Fair, worthy son . . .

- (3) **Oxford's infant son.** Henry Wriothesley did not die during Oxford's lifetime, but Oxford had a son who did. The parish register of the church at Castle Hedingham contains a death notice:

1583. May 9th. The Earl of Oxenford's first son.

Oxford had reconciled with his wife, Anne Cecil, about a year earlier, and she was grief-stricken at the loss. Perhaps at her husband's suggestion, she tried to

assuage her grief by writing epitaphs,²⁰ one of which contains the lines

Or if the mouth, time, did not glutton up all,
Nor I, nor the world, were deprived of my son . . .

In the *Tragedy*, the grieving mother Isabella says

Time is the author both of truth and right,
And time will bring this treachery to light.
(2.5.112-113)

Compare this with line 5.1.45 in *Measure for Measure*, spoken by Isabella:

. . . for truth is truth to the end of reckoning

and with a letter of 7 May 1603 from Oxford to Robert Cecil:²¹

For truth is truth, though never so old, and
time cannot make that false which once was true.

The above three candidates for association with the character Horatio contain at least a hint of textual corroboration. I would like to propose one more candidate whose historical circumstance is suggestive, although I have not been able to find any specific references in the text.

French baron Jehan de Simier arrived in London 5 January 1579. His mission was to prepare the way for his master, Hercule-François de Valois, Duc d'Alençon, who was coming to England to woo Elizabeth, an endeavor that would last for more than four years, and in the end would prove unsuccessful. Simier was an accomplished courtier, and Elizabeth delighted in his company from the very first, a development which induced paroxysms of jealous fury in Leicester and Hatton. At the end of June Simier asked Elizabeth to issue a passport for Alençon. Leicester argued passionately against it, but in the end Simier prevailed. We quote Hume:

Shortly afterwards a desperate attempt was made by one of the Queen's guard to assassinate Simier, and it was at once concluded, doubtless correctly, that it had been done at the instance of Leicester and Hatton.²²

Simier retaliated by informing Elizabeth of Leicester's marriage to Lettice Knollys, the widow of Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex. The marriage had occurred the previous year (1578) and had been kept secret from the Queen, though an item of gossip among the courtiers. Elizabeth was furious, and

banished Leicester for as long as she could stand to be separated from him.

Soon afterwards another attempt was made upon Simier's life, this time by a shot whilst he was on the river with the Queen. He had previously lived with Castelnau at the French embassy, but now, in order to avoid the risk of his going backwards and forwards daily by water, the Queen brought him to her palace at Greenwich, and there lodged him, to the dismay and disgust of the English courtiers.²³

Late in 1581 Simier was again in London.

Simier was attacked on the London 'Change by hired cut-throats, but fortunately once more escaped. He again complained to his protectress, whose rage knew no bounds. Calling Leicester to her, she called him a murderous poltroon who was only fit for the gallows and warned him and Alençon's courtiers that if anything happened to her "ape" in England they should suffer for it.²²

There are at least two other instances in which Leicester used murder to rid himself of a romantic rival, but I will not include the details here.²³ I believe the case of Simier is relevant to the *Tragedy* (a) because Leicester acted in concert with Hatton (at least according to Hume), and (b) because the love object involved was Elizabeth, standing in for Bel-imperia.

The *Tragedy* and *Hamlet*: the Generational Inversion. I have noted that in *The Spanish Tragedy* Isabella dies from grief over the death of her son, while in *Hamlet* there is a generational inversion: it is the daughter, Ophelia, who dies from grief over the death of her father. If we compare the fates of the five leading characters in the *Tragedy* with those of their counterparts in *Hamlet*, we see that this inversion holds in each case. The table on the following page explicitly shows these comparisons, and briefly summarizes the plot element that leads roles in the two plays to be associated. The third column lists the historical figure with whom each character in *Hamlet* is conventionally associated in the Oxfordian literature.²⁴ The two remarkable aspects of this comparison are (1) the consistency of the inversion—it holds for all major characters; and (2) the fact that in each case the relevant historical figure agrees in generational placement with the character in *Hamlet* rather than the corresponding character in the *Tragedy* (i.e., Gertrude was Hamlet's mother, and Elizabeth was old enough to be Oxford's mother, while the Elizabeth figure in the *Tragedy*, Bel-imperia, is of the younger generation). Is this just coincidence?

In the previous paper² I suggested that the plethora of quotations from Latin authors indicated that the play was

initially written during Oxford’s teenage years, when he had an adolescent’s need to show off his learning, and that it was more or less continually revised and enriched as Oxford gained in experience, particularly as he traveled through Europe in 1575-1576. Spain’s annexation of Portugal in 1580 is reflected in the play. Another author has extended the reference to this conflict into 1582:

Alexandro, the Portuguese Lord falsely accused in I.iii is described by the Viceroy as ‘Terceira’s lord’ . . . It is difficult to imagine the name of the second-largest island in the Portuguese Azores as having much currency before the notable battle there of July-August 1582 . . . ²⁵

So Oxford’s active interest in continuing to revise the *Tragedy* lasted from, say, 1567 or 1568 well into 1582, and if our speculation about the death of his infant son is correct, into May of 1583—a period of some fifteen years. The grip on his imagination exerted by this material, this theme, must have been enormously strong.

The early 1580s were difficult for Oxford. In December 1580 he was vilified by three Catholic nobles whom he had accused of traitorous activities. In March 1581 he was banned from the Court and imprisoned in the Tower for impregnating Anne Vavator. In March 1582 he was wounded in a fight with Thomas Knyvet (Anne Vavator’s uncle) and was lame for the rest of his life. A letter by his father-in-law Burghley from this period describes Oxford as “ruined and in adversity.” ²⁶

Oxford suffered another blow in June 1583 with the death of Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, who had been a father figure to the young Oxford, and one of his staunchest allies at court. Sussex had been a political opponent of Leicester’s, and he was widely suspected to have been poisoned by him. The previous year had seen the return of Lord Willoughby (Oxford’s brother-in-law) from a diplomatic mission to Denmark. Is it possible that these two events, together with an emotional funk brought on by a sea of troubles, triggered a burst of creative energy that led Oxford to initiate a major revision of *The Spanish Tragedy*—a revision that threw off the shell of inverted generational relationships and boldly displayed a one-to-one correspondence between dramatic and real-life characters—a revision that turned the *Tragedy* into the play we know as *Hamlet*? This is of course speculation, but it is speculation about real events that happened to a real person, and to me at least it is infinitely more exciting than the airy “could-have-beens” that infest orthodox biographies. And note that a key part of “realizing” the Bard—making him a real person—is knowledge of works written under pen names other than “Shakespeare.”

To write a play with two coherent subtexts—combined with an overt plot that makes it a popular hit—is no small achievement; it requires genius of the highest order. My experience with Elizabethan dramatists has convinced me that only one of that group could have done it, and that man was Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

Generational comparison of characters in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* with historical figures in the Elizabethan court

<i>The Spanish Tragedy</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Historical
Hieronimo (old) [Protagonist whose family member is killed; seeks revenge]	Hamlet (young)	Oxford (young)
Isabella (old) [Romantically linked to protagonist, kills herself from grief]	Ophelia (young)	Anne Cecil (young)
Horatio (young) [Member of protagonist’s family, victim of murder]	King Hamlet (old)	Sussex (old)
Bel-imperia (young) [Romantically associated with victim]	Gertrude (old)	Elizabeth (old)
Lorenzo (young) [Villain, responsible for murdering family member]	Claudius (old)	Leicester (old)

[Longtime Oxfordian C. V. “Chuck” Berney is a founding trustee and former president of the Shakespeare Fellowship.]

1. C. V. Berney, "Who Wrote *The Spanish Tragedy*?" *Shakespeare Matters* 4.2 (Winter 2005).
2. C. V. Berney, "Hidden Allusions in Oxford's *Spanish Tragedy*," *Shakespeare Matters* 4.4 (Summer 2005).
3. Martin A. S. Hume, *The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth* (Fisher Unwin, 1898).
4. *Leicester's Commonwealth*, D. C. Peck, ed. (Ohio UP, 1985), 100-102.
5. Arthur Freeman, *Thomas Kyd: Facts and Problems* (Oxford, 1967), 58. The first researcher to note this parallel was Fredson T. Bowers in "Kyd's Pedringano: Sources and Parallels," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 13 (1931), 241-249. Another author, T. W. Baldwin (*On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Plays* [Illinois, 1959], 185-199) refers to a manuscript titled *Letter of Estate* which is apparently an early version of *Leicester's Commonwealth*. He finds that the version of the betrayed-criminal story in the *Letter of Estate* is closer to that in the *Tragedy* both in the events described and in the wording, and concludes that the *Tragedy* was the source of both versions of what he terms the Leicester "libel."
6. Sir Walter Scott, *Kenilworth* (Dodd & Mead, 1956), 195.
7. Peck, 96.
8. Peck, 93.
9. Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, *This Star of England* (Coward-McCann, 1952), 272. Elizabeth's nickname for Hatton was "Lyddes" (i.e., "Eyelids") or "Mutton" or "Sheep." Her nickname for Leicester was "Eyes."
10. *The Spanish Tragedy*, 2.1.11-28. C. F. T. Brooke and N. B. Paradise, *English Drama 1580-1642* (Heath, 1933), 106.
11. Charlton Ogburn, Jr., *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (EPM Publications, 1984), Chapter 25, 510-536.
12. Ogburn, Jr., 511.
13. Ogburn, Jr., 503-504.
14. Ogburn, Jr., 478, 640.
15. Ogburn, Jr., 554. Examples of the use of gloves (often described as perfumed) as love tokens: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* 2.1.1; *Much Ado About Nothing* 3.4.62; *Love's Labor's Lost* 5.2.48; *The Winter's Tale* 4.4.222, 4.4.250; *Troilus and Cressida* 5.2.79.
16. Ogburn, Jr., 508, 511.
17. Hank Whittemore, *The Monument* (Meadow Geese Press, 2005).
18. Ogburn, Jr., 523.
19. Freeman, 115.
20. Ogburn, Jr., 663-664.
21. Ogburn and Ogburn, 2.
22. Hume, 209-210, 278.
23. The instances referred to are the death of John Sheffield in 1568 and of Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex, in 1576. See C. V. Berney, "*Leicester's Commonwealth: Portrait of a Serial Killer?*" *Shakespeare Matters* 3.4 (Summer 2004).
24. See, for example, Ogburn, Jr., 365-372.
25. Freeman, 53.
26. Burghley to Christopher Hatton, 12 March 1583, quoted in Ogburn, Jr., 653-654.

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Q and A

with **James A. Warren,**

Compiler of *An Index to Oxfordian Publications*

Newsletter: How did you get the idea to compile an index? How did you get started?

James Warren: I had been reading books on the authorship question for ten years or so without realizing that the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship in the United States and the De Vere Society in England regularly issued newsletters and a journal, *The Oxfordian*. Once I discovered them, early in 2011, I ordered all the back issues that were available for purchase from the SOS, the SF and the DVS and began reading them. I was soon overwhelmed by the wealth of information they contained. I had to do something to try to keep the articles and their authors straight in my mind, and also to ensure that my own research wouldn't duplicate projects already completed or underway by others, so I began making lists of the contents of each issue.

Around the same time I discovered the five anthologies of older Oxfordian articles by Paul Altrocchi and Hank Whittemore, and created a list of their contents as well. I then got the idea of combining the lists of the newsletters, journal and anthologies into one database that could be sorted by author, title, publication and date. It occurred to me that others might benefit from access to the database, so I sent a copy to Bill Boyle, former editor of *Shakespeare Matters*. He was enthusiastic about the list, saying that it was just what Oxfordians had needed for years. Bill helped me shape up the format a bit, and we passed copies around at the first Oxfordian conference I ever attended, the SARC conference at Concordia University in September 2011.

NL: How did you find some of the older periodicals?

JW: After distributing copies of the database, I thought I was done. But then I learned that all the older issues of the SOS Newsletter not available for purchase were available in electronic format through the website, so I printed them all out and began indexing them. At the same time, Bill Boyle offered to send me copies of the older Oxfordian newsletters and quarterlies from the 1930s onwards, and I began indexing them. That took several months. Bill and I then came up with a better format, which became the first edition of the *Index*, published in March 2012. The second edition, a year later, was in the same format and filled in the gaps with the issues that I hadn't had access to for the first edition. Because the second edition indexed every issue of every Oxfordian periodical since the 1930s, I again thought I was done, except for periodic updating.

NL: What is new in the third edition?



JW: In preparing the *Index* for the third edition, I knew that there was still a lot of Oxfordian material not included. I branched out to include articles that had reviewed and commented on the Oxfordian thesis in non-Oxfordian publications such as *The Times Literary Supplement* or *The New York Times*—more than a thousand articles altogether, including the regular Oxfordian columns that had appeared in *Shakespeare Pictorial* (1929-1939) and Louis Marder's *Shakespeare Newsletter* (1979-1991).

I also realized how useful it would be to have a list of all Oxfordian books, so I added an extensive bibliography of every Oxfordian book published since 1920, along with selected non-Oxfordian books on the Shakespeare authorship question in general. The 350 listings in the new book section include both nonfiction commentary and criticism, and also fictional works inspired by the authorship question. I also added a "J. Thomas Looney Reading List," with details of all of Looney's Oxfordian writings as well as commentary about them and him by others, in preparation for the important 2020 centennial of the publication of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*.

NL: What are some of the other benefits of the *Index* for Oxfordians?

JW: The *Index* can help Oxfordians today become more aware not only of each other's work, but also of the outstanding contributions made by so many Oxfordians in the past. It is important that those of us currently involved in Oxfordian activities do not forget that we are part of a movement stretching back almost 100 years, to the time

when J. Thomas Looney first identified Edward de Vere as Shakespeare, and even farther if we include those before Looney who recognized that the man from Stratford could not have been the author.

Most people are already aware of such luminaries as J. Thomas Looney, Percy Allen, Capt. Bernard M. Ward and Col. Bernard R. Ward, Eva Turner Clark, Charles W. Barrell, Charlton and Dorothy Ogburn, Charlton Ogburn, Jr., and Ruth Loyd Miller. But they may not be aware of the sizable contributions made by other Oxfordians during the past half-century whose articles are still worth reading, including Louis P. Bénézet, Gwynneth M. Bowen, Herbert Cutner, Gordon G. Cyr, Col. Montagu Douglas, Father Francis Edwards, Katherine E. Eggar, A. Bronson Feldman, Admiral H.H. Holland, Richard C. Horne, Jr., Morse Johnson, William Kent, Harold W. Patience, Canon Gerald Rendall, David W.T.C. Vessey, and Ruth M.D. Wainwright. These individuals are well worth remembering not only for the quality of their research, but also for their effort to keep the Oxfordian flame alive during the long decades of the past ninety-five years.

NL: Beyond your *Index*, what other important tools are needed to support Oxfordian research?

JW: As useful as it is, the *Index* is only one of three tools that researchers need, the other two being a subject index to the entries in it, and a database that will make all entries readily available. Bill Boyle, through his Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (SOAR) catalog, available at the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library (NESOL) website (www.shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org), has undertaken these tasks. SOAR now contains online, key-word searchable records for the titles of all listings in this third edition of the *Index*, and has links to online versions of several thousand of the listings, with the goal being to have links to all of them. Ultimately what is needed is a searchable database of every Oxfordian article and book—and every online article and blog entry—ever written.

[The Third Edition of James A. Warren's *An Index to Oxfordian Publications* may be purchased from the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library:

www.shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org/NESOL_Bookstore.html]

Film Review: *Nothing Truer Than Truth*

Reviewed by Howard Schumann

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan's film *Nothing Truer than Truth* proposes that the true author of the Shakespeare canon is Edward De Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, and uses animation, graphics, archival footage, and interviews with prominent figures in the arts and academia to support its case. Focusing on the sixteen-month period in 1575-76 when Oxford traveled throughout Italy, the location where ten of William Shakespeare's plays are set, the film was shot at Castle Hedingham in Essex, England, Northern Italy, and at relevant historical sites in Venice, Brenta, Padua, Mantua, and Verona such as Villa Foscari, La Malcontenta, the Palazzo Ducale, the Jewish Ghetto in Venice and other locations that complement Richard Paul Roe's recent book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*.

In her film, Eagan-Donovan looks at the life of Edward de Vere, noting Oxford's outstanding education in the home of William Cecil and his tutor Sir Thomas Smith, and the fact that he had direct access to the Queen and the court, both connections reflected in the plays and poems. It also shows many parallels between Oxford's life and the people and events in the plays, such as the accepted identification of Polonius in *Hamlet* as being a caricature of William Cecil and the fact that both Hamlet and de Vere were attacked by pirates. Another strong piece of evidence for Oxford's authorship presented is the number of marked passages in the Geneva Bible owned by Oxford that appear in Shakespeare's plays.

Little context is provided, however, for the discussion and no case is made questioning the

correctness of the accepted attribution of the man from Stratford. The assumption seems to be that the audience is already familiar with the case against William Shaksperre and is looking for an alternative candidate; in my view, this is an unsupportable assumption.

The most impressive part of the film is its discussion of details in the plays relative to Oxford's trip to Italy. Shakespeare Authorship Coalition Chairman John Shahan asks how Shakespeare knew of such precise and specific details about Italy; he suggests that there is no other way to account for Shakespeare's knowledge except to acknowledge that he had been there. The film describes and illustrates such details as the location of the Sagittary in *Othello*, the identification of Belmont as being Villa Foscari, the author's familiarity with Gaspar Ribeiro as the prototype for Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, and the use of techniques borrowed from the commedia dell'arte.

One of the film's main contentions is that the author's bisexuality offers an explanation for the use of the pseudonym "Shake-speare," both during the author's life and after his death, and for the continued refusal of academia to accept de Vere as Shakespeare. As evidence, the director asserts that the relationship between the "Fair Youth" and the author of the Sonnets is clear evidence of homosexuality. She also suggests that the charges of pederasty leveled in 1580-81 about de Vere's relationship with the sixteen-year-old Orazio Cuoco, a Venetian choirboy, are further evidence of his sexual preferences.

The film fails to mention that Cuoco never claimed any sexual wrongdoing by the Earl and was not asked about it during an Italian inquisition. It ignores the fact that Dr. Noemi Magri investigated the transcript of the Venetian Cuoco's interrogation and concluded that his

stay with the Oxford in 1576-77 did not involve any "sexual abuse" as is reported on Professor Alan H. Nelson's website. Instead, the concern over Orazio's being "perverted" (the transcript's language) has to do with the possibility of his being "converted" to Queen Elizabeth's faith by "reading prohibited books" or being taught the "doctrine of heretics."

Also not mentioned is that the pederasty allegations were made by Oxford's sworn enemies Henry Howard and Charles Arundel, who also accused him of atheism, lying, heresy, disobedience to the crown, treason, murder for hire, habitual drunkenness, vowing to murder various courtiers, and declaring that Elizabeth had a bad singing voice. Needless to say, no evidence to support any of these charges was ever presented. In the *Sonnets*, Eagan-Donovan's conclusion that the relationship between de Vere and Southampton demonstrates Oxford's bisexuality fails to point out that many Oxfordians believe that the nature of this relationship is one of father and son, not of lovers.

Nothing Truer Than Truth presents a strong case that de Vere's knowledge and experience gained from his travels to Europe is clearly reflected in the plays of Shakespeare. Unfortunately, with regard to Oxford's bisexuality, the film confuses speculation with fact, failing to suggest that there are different interpretations within the Oxfordian community on its relevance to the authorship question. While the director is certainly entitled to her opinions on the subject, what is overlooked is the fact that that the film represents Edward de Vere to the world and will be judged as being representative of what all Oxfordians believe. In that context, while the film aptly uses de Vere's phrase that "nothing is truer than truth," it ultimately fails to adhere to the spirit of those words.

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan Responds

Howard Schumann correctly notes that my film does not cover in detail the case against William Shakspeare as the author; that omission was intentional. I chose to focus specifically on Edward de Vere's life story. As a writer, I immediately recognized its compelling narrative potential. It has all the elements of the archetypal hero's journey, from losing his father at age twelve, to answering the call to adventure on the continent, to bringing the Renaissance to England upon his return home.

As Mark Anderson's definitive biography details, many events in de Vere's life are depicted in Shakespeare's plays. I decided to option Mark's book, *"Shake-speare" By Another Name*, to make a film before he had even finished writing it. I was confident then, as now, that when viewers see de Vere's experiences mirrored in the plays and poems, they will realize that he must have been writing under the pseudonym Shakespeare. Further, there are several excellent films about the authorship question in general, and the

arguments against the man from Stratford in particular, including Roland Emmerich's *Anonymous*, Alan Austin's seminal *Frontline* documentary "The Shakespeare Mystery," and Lisa Wilson and Laura Wilson Matthias's *Last Will. & Testament*.

Regarding the author's sexuality, I chose to take a controversial position on the reason for the pseudonym. Many Oxfordians do not agree with this view, or if they do, they are uncomfortable talking about it. I first discovered de Vere in a history class at Harvard University. Professor Don Ostrowski suggested the authorship question as a topic for a paper on the impact of source material on our understanding of history, and recommended J. Thomas Looney's book. In *Shakespeare Identified*, Looney noted Shakespeare's "conflicted feelings toward women" and de Vere's early poetry.

Since I had written poetry and studied androgyny in Shakespeare's work, Looney's argument convinced me that de Vere was the true Shakespeare. I then found Joseph Sobran's book, *Alias Shakespeare*, in which he makes a strong case for de Vere's sexual preference as the cause for the reinvention of Shakespeare as a commoner.

I am certainly not alone in reading many of the *Sonnets* as homosexual love poems, nor am I the only one to identify the theme of bisexuality in Shakespeare's work. Marjorie Garber, Harold Bloom, Stanley Wells, Rene Weis, and Stephen Greenblatt are just a few of the Shakespeare scholars who acknowledge the significance of sex and gender identity in so much of the canon. None of them, however, would admit to being an Oxfordian. In my undergraduate studies, I concluded that the author's bisexuality was the reason for the taboo against de Vere in academia.

In making the film, I have found some circumstantial evidence to support my thesis. Almost all of the university professors I contacted preferred not to appear on camera, or simply politely declined; de Vere indeed remains taboo on most college campuses. I learned more about the relationship between Elizabethan theater and the sexual behavior of actors and patrons at the playhouses, about attitudes towards sexuality and gender identity in late-sixteenth century Venice, and about the use of pseudonyms by writers throughout history. I found a correlation between the use of a pen name and a desire to conceal sexual preference. All of this is circumstantial, as is much of the evidence for de Vere as Shakespeare. Some excellent scholars, including Alexander Waugh, Roger Stritmatter, Mark Anderson, Bonner Cutting, Nina Green, and Rick Waugaman are leading the way to the discovery of tangible documentation of de Vere as the true author. In the interim, I am committed to the premise that de Vere's sexuality is a major reason for the pseudonym.

As to the criticism that I do not mention the more popular conjecture about the reason for the pseudonym among Oxfordians, the Prince Tudor theory, I note that there is no evidence that proves that de Vere was either Queen Elizabeth's son or the Earl of Southampton's

father. Those hypotheses are, in my view, sufficiently explored in *Anonymous* and *Last Will. & Testament*.

I titled my Harvard paper “Nothing is Truer than Truth” after reading Looney’s translation of it from *Vero Nihil Verius*, de Vere’s motto, a clear pun on the family name. We know that de Vere loved puns, and he was never one to stop at just one meaning for any configuration of “words, words, words” he devised. Perhaps he was poking fun at his future readers by pointing out that each of us believes that nothing is truer

than our own dearly held truths. It would be a fitting commentary on the Shakespeare orthodoxy’s refusal to give up its rags-to-riches mythology. For me, *Nothing is Truer than Truth*, the title of the film, comments on the very nature of how we define truth, as it pertains to attribution, authorship, history, and the recognition of de Vere as the author of the Shakespeare canon.



A 1578 Poem about de Vere’s Trip to Italy (cont. from p. 1)

Remember Heauen, forget not Hell, and way thyne owne estate,
Reuoke³⁶ to minde whom thou hast left, in shamefull blame & hate:
Yea minde³⁷ her well who did submit, into thine onely powre,
Both hart and life, and therewithall, a ritche and wealthy dowre:

And last of all which greeues mee most, that I was so begylde,
Remember, most forgetfull man, thy pretty tatling³⁸ childe:
The least of these surnamed³⁹ things, I hope may well suffice,
To shew to thee the wretched Dame⁴⁰, that did this bill deuise.

I speake in vayne, thou hast thy will,⁴¹ and now sayth *Aesons sonne*,⁴²
Medea may packe vp her pypes,⁴³ the golden Fleese is wonne:⁴⁴
If so, be sure *Medea* I will, shew forth my selfe in deede,⁴⁵
Yet gods defend⁴⁶ though death I taste, I should distroy thy seede:

Agayne, if that I should enquire, wherfore thou doost soiurne,
No answeere fitly mayst thou make, I know, to serue thy turne:⁴⁷
Thou canst not say but that I haue, obseru’d my loue to thee,
Thou canst not say but that I haue, of life vnchast bin free.⁴⁸

Thou canst not cloak (through want) thy flight, since riches did
abound:
Thou néedes not shame of mée thy spouse, whose byrth not low is
found,
As for my beauty, thou thy self, earwhile didst it commend,
And to conclude I know no thing, wherin I dyd offend:

Retier⁴⁹ with speed, I long to see, thy barke in wished bay,
The Seas are calmer to returne, then earst to fly away:
Beholde the gentill windes doo serue, so that a frendly gayle,⁵⁰
Would soone conuay to happy Porte,⁵¹ thy most desired sayle:

Return would make amends for all, and bannish former wronge,
Oh that I had for to entice, a *Scyrens* flattering songe:
But out alas, I haue no shift,⁵² or cunning to entreat,
It may suffice in absence thine, that I my griefes repeate.

Demaund not how I did disgest,⁵³ at first thy sodayne flight,
For ten dayes space I tooke no rest, by day nor yet by night:
But like to *Baccus* beldame Nonne,⁵⁴ I sent and rangde apace,
To sée if that I mought thee finde, in some frequented place:

Now here, now there, now vp, now down, my fancy so was fed,
Untill at length I knew of troth, that thou from mee wert fled:
Then was I fully bent⁵⁵ with blade, to stab my vexed harte,
Yet hope that thou wouldst come agayn, my purpose did conuert:⁵⁶

provocative; it makes one think of the secret authorship of “A young gentilwoman.” Many poems in the collection are anonymous; ten are signed with Proctor’s initials. Several poems deal with separated lovers, and others are written—as is the present poem—in the voice of a woman complaining of her false lover. Anthony Munday, who worked as de Vere’s secretary by 1579 and who, like Proctor, was an apprentice of John Allde, wrote commendatory verses for *A Gorgious Gallery*.⁴ Matthew Steggle, in his Oxford Dictionary of National Biography article on Proctor, writes of the book that it “had a complicated gestation,” and that, “to modern readers, its most interesting individual item is ‘The History of Pyramus and Thisbie Truly Translated,’ a translation which may possibly have given Shakespeare material for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.”

There is a recurrent pattern of obscure authorship and editorship in Elizabethan anthologies of verse. The many editions of Tottel’s *Miscellany* were not all accurately dated. Richard Edwards was dead for ten years when his *Paradise* was published. The first edition of *Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* was anonymous; there was then a radically different second edition, now attributed to Gascoigne. The present poem contains three phrases that had only been used once before (according to Early English Books Online’s current data) in *Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*: “thou hast thy will”; “furious fate”; and “wretched dame.”

There was no second edition of *Gorgious Gallery*. According to Rollins, it was only after many years that a second copy of the formerly unique early edition was found. Rollins maintains that the book had little influence on Elizabethan writers. Only Thomas Nashe and Thomas Dekker mentioned it. This is consistent with the speculation that the book was suppressed once de Vere reconciled with his wife Anne, and evidence of their past estrangement was censored.

De Vere’s separation from Anne after his return from Italy publicized his doubts that he was the father of her child, born while he was abroad.⁵ Although Anne was pregnant when de Vere left for the Continent, he seemed certain he was not the father. In the poem, the

And so ere since I liu'd in hope bemixt with dreadful feare,
My smeared⁵⁷ face through endles teares,⁵⁸ vnpleasant doth appeare:
My slepes vnsound with vgly dreams,⁵⁹ my meats are vayn⁶⁰ of taste
My gorgious rayment is dispilde,⁶¹ my tresses rudly plaste.

And to bee breefe: I bouldly speake, there doth remayne no care:
But that therof in amplest wise, I doo possesse a share:
Lyke as the tender sprig⁶² doth bend, with euery blast of winde,
Or as the guidelesse Ship on Seas, no certaine Porte⁶³ may finde.

So I now subiecte vnto hope, now thrall to carefull dread,
Amids the Rocks, tween hope and feare, as fancy mooues, am led:
Alas returne, my deare returne, returne and take thy rest,
God graunt my wordes may haue the force, to penytrat thy brest.⁶⁴

What doost thou thinke in *Italy*, some great exployt to win?⁶⁵
No, no, it is not *Italy*, as sometimes it hath bin:⁶⁶
Or doost thou loue to gad⁶⁷ abroad,⁶⁸ the forrain costes⁶⁹ to vew,
If so, thou hadst not doone amisse, to bid mée first a dew:

But what hath bin the cause, I néede not descant⁷⁰ longe,
For sure I am, meane while poore wench, I only suffer wrong:
Wel thus I leaue, yet more could say: but least thou shouldst refuse,
Through tediousnesse to réede my lines, the rest I will excuse:

Untill such time as mighty *Jove* doth send such luckye grace,
As wée therof in fréendly wise, may reason face to face.⁷¹
Till then farwell, and hée⁷² thee kéepe, who only knowes my smart:⁷³
And with this bill I send to thee, a trusty Louers harte.

*By mee, to thee, not mine,⁷⁴ but thine,
Since Loue doth moue the same,
Thy mate, though late, doth wright, her light,
Thou well, canst tell, her name.⁷⁵*

1. unexpectedly.
2. The poem is not divided into stanzas in its original printing. For greater readability, I have taken the (considerable) liberty of dividing it into 24 four-line stanzas of rhymed couplet “fourteeners”—i.e., seven iambs per line (Rollins calls the meter the “ballad stanza” (xxiv)). The final verse breaks two such lines into four lines of four, three, four, and three iambs. The poem is paired with the following: “A letter sent from beyond the Seas to his lover, perswading her to continew her loue towards him.”
3. consider, suppose; earliest instance of “imagine when” in EEBO.
4. unplanned; irregular.
5. lacking any cares.
6. Note that, like the Sonnets, this verb is ungrammatical. With the sort of syntactical pivot that characterizes many Sonnets, the implication might be: “Suppose that the lines you are reading came to be so blurry because of my grief.”
7. The earliest example of “proud disdain” in EEBO is Edward Hall’s 1548 *The Union of the two Noble and Illustre Houses of Lancastre and Yorke*, an important source for Shakespeare.
8. The earliest use of “surpassing grief” in EEBO.

speaker refers to her paternally abandoned child as the circumstance “that greeues mee most.” As is well known, de Vere refused to live with Anne for several years after he returned from the Continent in April 1576. De Vere wrote a furious letter to Lord Burghley one week after his return to England, enraged that his father-in-law was meddling in de Vere’s private relationship with his wife Anne. In it he expresses his intense displeasure to Burghley that his personal affairs “had not needed to have been the fable of the world if you would have had the patience to have understood me” (Anderson, 117). Anderson maintains that “De Vere would spend the rest of his life writing about the dramatic and traumatic events of his twenty-sixth year” (118).

The present poem appears to be an early case in point. Lord Burghley, his father-in-law, wrote to Queen Elizabeth on April 23 of that year, asking her to intercede to persuade de Vere to reconcile with Anne and limit the public scandal of his claim that her child was illegitimate. One might speculate that the Queen insisted that de Vere consider Anne’s position. This poem might then have been part of de Vere’s response, showing his capacity to imagine Anne’s feelings of betrayal that began while he was in Italy, and exploded when he shunned her upon his return.

It would be in character for de Vere to turn to his literary genius when he had something important to say to Queen Elizabeth, in view of their mutual love of poetry. I have previously speculated that de Vere petitioned the Queen for permission to visit the Continent through a poem.⁶ In fact, several words and phrases in the 1578 poem echo that very poem. I have also speculated that his petition for the £1,000 annuity the Queen eventually granted him was the first draft of *The Arte of English Poesie*,⁷ much of which is addressed to her in the second person.

The author of *The Arte* draws attention to the pivotal role played by the highly developed imagination of the poet—“(if it be not disordered) [it is] a representer of the best, most comely, and beautiful images or appearances of things to the soul and according to their very truth. If otherwise [i.e., if the imagination becomes ‘disordered’ or impaired], then doth it breed chimeras and monsters in man’s imaginations, and not only in his imaginations, but also in all his ordinary actions and life which ensues” (110).⁸ If he wrote these words (I believe he did) de Vere may have been recalling his years of “disordered” jealousy of Anne, and the devastating effect it had on Anne’s life. The same phenomenally creative imagination that produced the best works of literature in history could also plague de Vere with unbearably obsessive jealousy. By contrast, in his chapter on “The form of poetical lamentations,” the author of *The Arte* perceptively observes that the poetic expression of grief about the “torments of love” (cf. the present poem) can be cathartic—“Lamenting

9. full of care.
10. sealed note.
11. cf. 'tears distilled' from Sonnet 119.
12. proclaim.
13. Rollins traces this "very common" allusion to a tiger as a trope for callousness back to Dido's reproach to Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*, IV, after she discovers her plans to abandon her: "No goddess was your mother!/ No Dardanus sired [auctor: father; or author] your line, you traitor, liar, no,/ Mount Caucasus fathered you on its flinty rugged flanks/ and the tigers of Hyrcania gave you their dugs to suck!" (Robert Fagles, translator, 457-459).
14. Cf. 1534 "A prayer for the molifeing and suplyeng of our harde hertes..." with the words "Molifie and make softe our harde hertes, blessed father, which be indured and hardened with the cursed custome of synne and wretchedness"; from *A prymer in Englyshe for certeyn prayers and godly meditations* (London: Johan Byddell, 1534). Echoing a prayer subtly enlists God on the side of the Gentlewoman.
15. Note the eighteen words in the poem that begin with the prefix *re-*, including especially "remember" (five times) and "return" (also five times).
16. Deceitful, which might allude to de Vere's accusation that his wife's first child was fathered by another man.
17. reform.
18. "loving mate" is found in Lewicke's 1562 translation of Boccaccio's *Titus and Gisippus*, and in Lyly's 1578 *Euphues*.
19. encumbered by a sticky substance—i.e., her tears; the only prior instance in EEBO is in John Dee's 1577 General and rare memorials, in "beclogged with supersition."
20. "most unhappy state" used in Norton's 1565 *Gorboduc*, among other uses.
21. The earliest example of "luckless star" in EEBO; there is a single earlier use of "lucky star."
22. The earliest example of "frowning god" in EEBO.
23. The second example of "hellish hag" in EEBO; the third is Robert Greene's 1584 *Gwyndonius the carde of fancie*.
24. The only prior use of "furious fate" in EEBO was in Gascoigne's 1573 *Hundreth sundrie flowres*—in *Jocasta*, by Gascoigne and Kindlemarsh, first performed in 1566; its third use was in Shakespeare's *Henry V*.
25. take after.
26. I.e., he is not your kinsman.
27. I.e., Aeneas.
28. "soyle" and "toyle" are also rhymed in *YGM*.
29. faithful mate: earliest example in EEBO is Arthur Brooke's *Romeo and Juliet*; "feere" in the sense of "mate" occurs eight times in Golding's *Metamorphoses*, VII, 84—this is much more often than its use in other early books listed in EEBO.
30. attractive body.
31. "bygone." This is the earliest use of the word as an adjective in EEBO (it is much earlier than the only example of this usage given in the OED).
32. This line illustrates a sort of "broken" or "dissected" alliteration that C.S. Lewis found in Shakespeare. Lewis gave an example from *Lucrece*: "To stamp the seal of time" (line 941); he noted that the first two consonants of "stamp" are repeated in "seal" and "time," respectively. This line of the 1578 poem has "spent," followed by "sweet," and later "playes."
33. slave.

is altogether contrary to rejoicing... and yet is it a piece of joy to be able to lament with ease and freely to pour forth a man's inward sorrows and the griefs wherewith his mind is surcharged...making the very grief itself (in part) cure of the disease" (135).

Could someone other than de Vere have written this poem? Perhaps. Although I strongly suspect de Vere was its author, I cannot establish it definitively. What about the fact that the speaker in the poem is a woman? If we take this authorial voice literally, as proof of the poet's identity, de Vere's wife Anne must be considered. When I first encountered this poem, I did consider the possibility she wrote it. In turn, this reminded me of the poems attributed to Anne on the death of her infant son in 1583, poems that are now assumed to have been written by John Soowthern.⁹ That is, I wondered if the present poem was similarly ghostwritten for Anne. However, one argument against Anne having written or commissioned the poem is the unlikelihood she would have allowed such a poem to be made public. She did not seem to share her husband's penchant for notoriety. Further, many aspects of the poem suggest de Vere's authorship.

For example, some words and phrases in the poem are consistent with de Vere's writing, including his pattern of coining words. One word in the 1578 poem ("surpassed" as an adjective) is the earliest such use listed in EEBO, much earlier than the first instance cited in the OED. Among my glosses on the poem are evidence of possible Shakespearean literary allusions—both by this poem, and also to this poem.¹⁰ Some phrases are the first (or only) usage cited in EEBO. Other phrases were earlier used by writers connected in various ways with de Vere—Brooke, Gascoigne, Golding, Lyly, and Munday. For example, "Thou hast thy will" occurs in this poem, as it does in Shakespeare's Sonnet 135 and in his *3 Henry VI*. We know de Vere was especially inventive in his use of language. He seemed to have a photographic memory for what he read, so that certain phrases in this poem may reflect conscious or unconscious literary allusions on his part.

I assume *A young Gentleman willing to travell into forreygne partes, being intreated to staie in England: Wrote as followeth (YGM)* was circulating in manuscript by 1578, so that readers of this *Yonge Gentilwoman* would detect the intertextuality between them. Let me highlight a few of these parallels. Both rhyme "soyle" with "toyle," and "win" with "bin" [been]. The present poem asks "doost though love to gad abroad"; *YGM* states "I must abroad." The present poem has "the golden Fleese is wonne"; *YGM* says "The golden fleece had binne to winne."

As a playwright, de Vere showed an extraordinary capacity to step into the shoes of other persons, and speak convincingly from their subjective points of view. If de Vere was putting himself in Anne's

34. excellent wenches.
35. flirtatious or wanton.
36. recall.
37. remember
38. prattling (also telling secrets).
39. named above.
40. Only prior use of “wretched dame” was in Gascoigne’s 1573 *Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*—it is used four times in his *Jocasta* there. *Flowres* includes an early use of “untwynd,” also used in *2 Henry IV*; *Jocasta* likewise includes the earliest use in EEBO of “undisguised”—cf. de Vere’s pattern of coining words beginning with *un-* (as well as his use of both fictional and literary disguises). De Vere has been proposed as the actual author of Gascoigne’s book.
41. The only prior use noted in EEBO was in Gascoigne’s *Flowres*, near the end of the book (where it occurs twice in three lines). “Thou hast thy will” occurs in Sonnet 135, as well as in *3 Henry VI*. Here, “will” suggests a pun, alluding not only to the husband’s willfulness (i.e., “You’re getting your wish”), but also his lust for the “Italian Dames.”
42. i.e., Jason.
43. to cease from action or speaking.
44. Cf. the parallel allusion in *YGM*: “If Jason of that minde had binne... The golden fleece had binne to winne.”
45. If her husband abandons her as Jason did Medea, she will avenge herself by killing their child, as Medea did. However, this resolve softens after only one line.
46. prevent; among earlier uses was Gascoigne, *ibid*.
47. to answer in a suitable way; EEBO’s second example of “serve thy turn” comes from Matthew Parker’s translation of the psalms—“The moone by night shall serve thy turne.”
48. I.e., he cannot accuse her of infidelity.
49. return.
50. This is the earliest example of “friendly gale” in EEBO; cf. the similar image of a “prosperous gale” in de Vere’s April 27, 1603, letter to Robert Cecil about the personal impact of Queen Elizabeth’s death.
51. The third example of “happy port” in EEBO; the earliest is Arthur Brooke’s *Romeo and Juliet*.
52. stratagem.
53. put up with.
54. Priestess.
55. determined; also aimed.
56. turn.
57. dirtied.
58. The earliest example of “endless tears” in EEBO.
59. The earliest example of “ugly dreams” in EEBO; several subsequent examples link them with disturbed sleep, as in this instance.
60. devoid.
61. Here I take ‘dispside’ as a misprint for a more apt, if newly coined word. “Piled” means “of a fabric, having a pile or nap.” “Despiled” would also allude to “despoiled” (which can mean “disrobed”). This conjecture seems more consistent than does the word “despised” with the other imagery in this stanza about the speaker’s face, sleep, and food being spoiled. It is noteworthy that Vivian Salmon (“Some functions of Shakespearean word-formations,” *Shakespeare Survey*, 1970) asserts that Shakespeare shows a predilection for coining words based on adding the prefix *dis-* to a verbed noun. “Pile” was first used to refer to fabric in 1568, according to the OED.

position here, it suggests that he did not believe she understood the powerful feelings that drew him to Italy. Both poems seem to refer to de Vere’s fourteen-month trip to the Continent in 1575-76. The present poem has “Eneas,” whereas *YGM* spoke of Troy, the original city of Aeneas. Hyder Rollins notes that Dido and Aeneas was a favorite topic in Elizabethan ballads (154).

Mark Anderson,¹¹ among others, speculates that the 1577 court play *A Historie of Error* (a precursor of *The Comedy of Errors*) was written by de Vere, and that in it he makes “self-deprecating jokes at his own jealous rage” (x) and “pathological behavior” (125) toward his wife. De Vere’s unusual “negative capability” included his rare flair for seeing himself as others saw (and ridiculed) him. If he exploited that capacity in writing his plays, it is plausible to speculate he put himself in his wife’s shoes in this poem, as though he is writing her character in an autobiographical play.¹² Thus, I do not believe we are required to take the poem’s female as literally proving its author was a woman. Many Oxfordian commentators view de Vere’s guilt over his mistreatment of Anne to be a central dynamic in his psychology, that blossomed into his brilliant treatment of pathological jealousy in several of his plays. The present poem may thus give us a window into the nascent process of de Vere stepping outside his jealous rage and narcissistic mortification, instead looking at things from Anne’s point of view. He does so brilliantly and poignantly. Although we do not know with certainty just when this poem was written, we can assume that it was between 1576 and 1578. A couple of years later, de Vere wrote his “Echo Poem” in the voice of his lover Anne Vavasour. Thus, we have another example of de Vere writing a poem from the perspective of a woman in his life.¹³

Caroline Spurgeon immeasurably enriches our understanding of Shakespeare through her close reading of his characteristic choices of imagery. She observes that the largest group of images in Shakespeare concerns nature (e.g., the “tiger”); of these, “by far the greatest number is devoted to ...the gardener’s point of view” (45-46; cf. the “tender sprig”). The “guideless ship” and “the seas are calmer to return” in this poem recall her further conclusion that “the next largest section [of Shakespeare’s nature imagery] is the sea, ships and seafaring” (47). One of the largest categories of images found in Shakespeare by Spurgeon is mythological (in this poem, Jason and Medea, Aeneas and Dido, Bacchus’s priestess, and Jove). Further, Spurgeon notes that in *All’s Well That Ends Well*, Helena speaks of the astrological influence of the stars under which a person was born. Helena (a character similar to de Vere’s wife) speaks variously of a “charitable star” (I.i.185), “baser stars” (I.i.191), and “luckiest stars” (I.iii.250). The last contrasts with the “luckless star” of the 1578 poem.

So the word “dispiled” was a Shakespearean coinage based on a noun introduced only a decade earlier than this poem.

62. The earliest example of “tender sprig” in EEBO.
63. The earliest example of “no certain port” in EEBO.
64. The earliest example of “penetrate thy breast” in EEBO.
65. Cf. “win renowne” and “golden fleece to win” in *YGM*.
66. Cf. “bin”/“win” rhyme in *YGM*. Rollins says of this line, “The wife means that a desire for fame or action is not what has taken her husband to Italy” (185).
67. to wander about with no serious object.
68. The earliest example of “love to gad abroad” in EEBO; cf. “abroad to rome” and “I must abroad” in *YGM*.
69. “Foreign coasts” was first used in EEBO by Gascoigne in *Flowres*: “As one that held his native soyle in skorne,/ In foraine coastes to feede his fantasie.” “Native soyle” also links Gascoigne’s poem with *YGM*.
70. comment.
71. Here is a variation on the pattern noted by C.S. Lewis —“friendly” is followed by “reason,” then by “face”—the first two consonants of the first word once again appear later, but this time, in reverse order.
72. I.e., God.
73. pain.
74. I.e., her heart.
75. The final stanza, dense with internal rhymes (each iamb rhymes), could be arranged as two “fourteeners,” the meter of the rest of the poem:
 ‘By mee, to thee, not mine, but thine, since Loue doth moue the same,
 Thy mate, though late, doth wright, her light, thou well, canst tell, her name.’
 The final stanza is reminiscent of the final stanza of an anonymous poem subscribed “My lucke is losse” (possibly de Vere’s pseudonym) in *Paradise of Daintie Devises*. The poem’s first line is, “I sigh? Why so? For sorrowe of her smart.” The final stanza shifts from iambic pentameter to three iambs per line, with the same rhyme in all nine lines. That final stanza begins with a paraphrase of the beginning of the final stanza of the 1578 poem: “What is, or may be mine,/ That is, and shall be thine.”

Examining earlier and later uses of words and phrases from this poem is illuminating. Let me give an especially interesting example. One line of the poem entreats the narrator’s husband to return quickly—to “retire with speed.” The earliest use of that phrase in EEBO is in William Thomas’s 1549 *The historie of Italie* (London: Thomas Berthelet).¹⁴ It refers there to the retreat of King Charles VIII of France, after invading Italy in 1494. The context tells a story that may have provided de Vere with some of the plot and character names of *The Tempest*. Lodovico Sforza encouraged this French invasion, in order to get Charles’s help in becoming the Duke of Milan. King Alfonso II of Naples opposed Sforza, who had usurped the rightful place of Alfonso’s son-in-law as Duke of Milan. As Charles’s invasion headed toward Naples, Alfonso abdicated his throne in favor of his son Ferdinand. Alfonso then spent the rest of his life on the island of Sicily, in a monastery. One could say that he, like Prospero, was driven to that island by the treachery of the usurping Duke of Milan. As Thomas puts it, he there “disposed himself to studie, solitarinesse, and religion.” In *The Tempest*, Prospero is Duke of Milan, but gives administrative authority to his brother Antonio, so he will have more time to devote to his books. Antonio then usurps power, and exiles Prospero, who lands on an island where he devotes his time to solitary study and magic. In the play, it is Alonso (no *f*) who is King of Naples, and Ferdinand is his son. It is likely that de Vere identified with Alfonso, especially as he neared the end of his own life.

In summary, identifying a poem Edward de Vere may have written—a poem that transparently addresses a crucial episode of his life—enlarges our understanding of his temperament and of his creativity. It also helps us reconstruct a bit of de Vere’s poetic work between the early poems signed “EO” and his later work signed with his famous pseudonym. I have used multiple, converging lines of evidence to build the case that de Vere was the author of this anonymous 1578 poem. I have shown that its content fits nearly precisely with a well-documented crisis in his life, when his wife Anne gave birth to their first child while he was living on the Continent. I believe that this is a work of considerable poetic skill. It seems to deliberately echo an earlier poem de Vere wrote about his desire to travel to the Continent. A large number of phrases are found in the works of Shakespeare. Other phrases echo those in important literary sources of de Vere. It shows de Vere’s capacity for empathy with the internal experience of his antagonist. The speaker of the poem counters her husband’s groundless jealousy with protestations of her “loyalty” and her innocence of “life unchast.”

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1. Steven May, a leading anti-Oxfordian expert on de Vere's early signed poetry, agreed that the "poem's speaker seems to be in exactly the state of Anne De Vere during her husband's sojourn" in Italy (personal communication, July 27, 2010). However, May did not accept my attribution of the poem to Edward de Vere.
2. I would ask the reader to give the poem a first reading now, before continuing to read my discussion of it.
3. Rollins, Hyder E., ed., *Gorgious Gallery* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1926).
4. These verses use "fraught" meaning "to supply or furnish with" (OED 3.a.); the OED lists Munday's use as the second instance of this meaning, whereas the first is by de Vere's uncle, Arthur Golding, in 1571.
5. Gerard Kilroy (personal communication, February 16, 2011) tentatively believes the following undated epigram by John Harington concerns these doubts as to the paternity of Anne's child: "While Caius doth remayne beyond the seas/ to follow there some great important sute,/ his land beares neither wheat, nor oats, nor peas,/ but yet his wife bare fayr and full grown frute./ Now what thinke you, doth cause his lands sterrillity,/ and his wives fruitfullnes and great fertillity,/ His Lands want occupiers to manure them,/ but she hath store [livestock used for breeding], and knowes how to procure [to obtain an illicit sexual partner] them" (text is from the manuscript copy of 400 epigrams prepared by Harington for Prince Henry in 1605 [Folger Shakespeare Library MS V.a.249]).
6. "A Wanderlust Poem, Newly Attributed to Edward de Vere," *Shakespeare Matters* 7(1):21-23 (2007); the poem is reprinted in *Brief Chronicles* 2:264-265. Its title is "A young Gentleman willing to travell into forreygne partes, being intreated to staie in England: Wrote as followeth." It was first published in the 1585 edition of *Paradise of Daintie Devises*.
7. "The Arte of English Poesie: The Case for Edward de Vere's Authorship." *Brief Chronicles* 2:121-141 (2010).
8. Whigham, Frank and Wayne A. Rebhorn, eds., *The Art of English Poesie* (1589) (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).
9. See Anderson (2005), 189.
10. I stumbled upon this poem while researching the astonishingly rich literary sources for "A Lover's Complaint." I found that the phrase "nature's outwards" in the latter (line 80) echoed "nature outwardly" in "An other louing Letter," the second poem following YGW (it begins, "Because my hart is not mine owne, but resteth now with thee") . Both phrases allude to a pleasing external appearance.
11. *Shakespeare by Another Name: The Life of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, the Man who was Shakespeare* (New York: Gotham Books, 2005).
12. An anonymous reviewer amplifies these points with some intriguing additions. The reviewer writes that "Oxford's uncle Henry Howard (Surrey) did this, writing poems in the voice of a woman, possibly his own wife, fretting about her husband being at sea. Surrey seems to have gotten this from Chaucer—and both are key influences on the younger de Vere as poet. The practice of adopting other voices (for Oxford, probably with such items as the Vavasour "Echo" poem and certain Queen Elizabeth productions that are questioned and whose deceptive origins are possibly illuminated in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *As You Like It* and elsewhere) can be seen as a middle step between lyric poetry and drama, between experimentation in adoption of other voices and the creation of whole characters out of text. The voice of this poem does sometimes sound like Helena from *All's Well that Ends Well* (with those Anne Cecil connections implicit)."
13. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer of this article for highlighting this point.
14. In Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky, "'O Brave New World': The Tempest and Peter Martyr's De Orbe Novo," *Critical Survey* 21:2 (fall, 2009) 7-42, it is noted that this source for Shakespeare has been known since the 19th century.



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