



**THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY**

**NEWSLETTERS**

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## LET THE REAL DEBATE BEGIN! (LEGALISMS OF "MOOT" FORMAT OBSCURE THE AUTHORSHIP QUESTION)

by  
Gordon C. Cyr

[Last November, the present writer was invited to substitute for Charlton Ogburn, who was ill, as a witness for the Oxfordian side in the British counterpart of the September 25, 1987 Moot Court held at American University in Washington, D.C. Three British Law Lords, headed by Lord Ackner, sat in judgement on the question, "who is the more credible author of Shakespeare's works, William Shakspere of Stratford or Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford?" Witnesses for the Oxfordian side were Dr. L.L. Ware and the present writer. Counsel for the Oxfordian side was Lord Robert Alexander. Witnesses for the Stratfordian side were two noted authors, Prof. Stanley Wells and Ernst Honigmann, and their counsel was Sidney Kentridge. The British Moot took place November 28 in London's historic Middle Temple, and had extensive media coverage.]

One thing should be clear to Oxfordians after their two unsuccessful tries at bringing the Oxfordian case to court (Washington, D.C., Sept. 25, 1987 and London, November 26, 1988) is that the intervention of lawyers unversed in the historical and biographical issues involved is not a valid device for eliciting the truth about a period so remote in time and ideology from our own. This quite aside from the evidence that several of the judges involved (especially in the British event) had clearly formed predispositions toward the Stratfordian side.

In the first place, who has ever heard of a murder trial that lasted only five hours? Or, rather, who has ever heard of a just verdict after a murder trial that short? And how competent is any jurist to evaluate the testimony of witnesses who are not subject to cross-examination?

It really is unfortunate that Ben Jonson or Francis Meres could not have been put in the witness box instead of the present writer, who could only offer his opinion that Ben Jonson might not have been telling the unvarnished truth about his "Beloved, the Author," and that Meres might not have known whether Oxford and Shakespeare were two separate writers, nor whether the "Shakespeare" he praises in *Palladis Tamia* was in fact the Stratford citizen with a similar name or someone else who adopted "Shakespeare" as a *nom de plume*. The question the Stratfordian counsel posed to the present writer was preceded by an important qualifier: "if we take Ben Jonson's [First Folio Ode] words at face value..." is it not the Stratford man being described there rather than Oxford? But, as our side tried to suggest, there were many reasons not to take Jonson at face value. These reasons are based upon inconsistencies in Jonson's description of the author (describing him as a contemporary of Kid, Marlowe, and Lyly — a description at odds with traditional Stratfordian chronology) and on a puttery whose sincerity, at least, is questionable, such as that "the graver" of the Droeshout portrait "had a strife with Nature to outdo the life" of the portrait's subject — remarks which must strike any viewer whose vision is not clouded by Stratfordian rose-colored glasses as more than a little ridiculous.

As for Meres, there is nothing in *Palladis Tamia* which clearly points to personal knowledge on Meres' part of either Oxford or Shakespeare. To cite Meres' silence on this point as evidence of authorship seems futile, to say the least. In any case, it is an argument that clearly cuts in more ways than one. These two points in the anti-Stratfordian case, along with the point our side tried to make that if Ben Jonson (and the other First Folio writers) were trying to deceive the public in putting forward Shakspere as the author, of course they would put in indicators to the Stratford man, seemed lost on the three Law Lords, who apparently were hell-bent on grasping at every straw proffered by the Stratfordian side. They also seemed determined not to allow two American upstarts like Charlton Ogburn or the present writer to come over there and knock down one of their sacred national idols — never mind that the Oxfordian theory was born and bred in England by Englishmen!

But more importantly, there was neither time nor opportunity within the format of a court proceeding to puncture many of the Stratfordian balloons, many of which were set afloat in the Stratfordian counsel's summary arguments, and thus not subject to correction by our side:

That Charlton Ogburn claims, in his book *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, that Southampton is the illegitimate son of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth. Anyone who has read Mr. Ogburn's book knows that this

statement is untrue. Our counsel was denied the opportunity to challenge opposing counsel's misstatement.

That the Oxfordians offer Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, and Henry James as doubters of the Stratford mythos, but no Elizabethan or Shakespearean scholar or historian. Sir George Greenwood and Canon Gerald Rendall both qualify as Shakespearean scholars, and Greenwood was a student of Elizabethan law practice. If it is contended that neither was a "professional" scholar (i.e., derived his income from such study), then neither were Sir Edmund K. Chambers nor Edmund Malone professionals in that sense. The point that Stratfordians overlook in their dismissal of Mark Twain's, Whitman's and James's qualifications (and one could add Whittier, Galsworthy, and it would seem, Coleridge to the list) is that unlike the professional scholars, these men were writers of either poetry or imaginative fiction and so presumably expert on what goes into the writing of such genres: an author writes best on what he knows. It was the inability to find the documented Shakespeare of the Record in the Shakespeare Works which gave rise to these writers' doubts, and Stratfordians cannot dismiss them so facilely.

That the argument based upon the knowledge of law displayed in Shakespeare's plays was demolished by J.M. Robertson — who was not a lawyer — in his book *The Baconian Heresy*. Our side was unable to point out that it was Robertson's whole case that was demolished — by Sir George Greenwood (who was a lawyer) in *Is There a Shakespeare Problem?*

That the knowledge of the game of real tennis displayed in the plays (tellingly conveyed by Dr. L.L. Ware, the other Oxfordian witness) could be accounted for by the Stratfordian citizen's presence in Southampton's bousehold. Of course, there is absolutely no evidence that Shakspere was ever inside Southampton's residence, and no biographer of the third earl has ever been able to show that they even knew each other.

It was clear that the British jurists had not read *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, or they would have noticed many of these holes in the Stratfordian case themselves. What other evidence is there of the bias charged to them at the outset of this article? The "unseemly haste" in which their opinions were written, for one thing: in half an hour, with a highly literary style on the part of all three. This is in stark contrast to the two hours taken by Justices Brennan, Blackmun, and Stevens, and, one must say, to the more openminded and considered judgements on the part of at least two of the American judges. The British counterparts, on the other hand, appeared almost gleeful at the Stratfordians' finding that the author of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* talked about a sea voyage from Verona to Milan (both inland cities), which was supposed to "prove" that Shakespeare did not really have the vast topographical knowledge of Italy so conspicuously demonstrated in other plays of the canon ("a dreadful solecism," one jurist termed it). The possibilities of poetic license (offered by Ogburn) or that the author might not have known the geography of the region at the time he wrote that play seem not to have occurred to the Law Lords. (Many scholars propose an early date for TGV because of "immaturity" and "crudity" of style.) Nor did the reasons the present writer gave on the stand for an earlier authorship of *The Tempest* make much of an effect on the judges, who apparently swallowed the Stratfordian professors' arguments whole.

Most of the problems narrated above could be avoided, the present writer believes, if the trial format is eschewed in favor of a conventional debate presentation. True, the problem of time is still a factor. But at least the time available would not be wasted by interruptions from the bench. Both in the Washington and London moots, these judicial intrusions were distracting and, inasmuch as they were more often directed to the Oxfordians (because the points we present are often new to lay persons), resulted in taking time away from a fair presentation of our case. The debate formula, in which each side presents its argument plus a rebuttal, can more effectively elicit the weaknesses in either presentation and can be judged more fairly on debating points alone. Much, of course, depends on the abilities of the debaters. The Washington event was actually closer to this format (except for the justices's interruptions), but the Oxfordians' attorney was hampered by not being an expert on the issue.

Also, Oxfordians may be ering in arguling the case for Oxford before the world is ready to believe in the necessity for an alternative author. Perhaps, a debate question should not be framed around "which of the two is a more credible author of Shakespeare's works," but instead, "is there enough evidence to question the identity" of the putative author? The British jurists were able to turn the former question to their own ends by asking, "why did it take until 1920 to come up with the Earl of Oxford as a candidate?" On the contrary, Stratfordians should be asked, "why have doubts about the Stratford man's authorship persisted for two hundred years?" This is a circumstance which is absolutely unique in Western literature, no matter what may be offered in the way of explanation.

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SHAKESPEARE MOOT OF 11/26/88  
APPRAISALS FROM ANONYMOUS SOURCES

The debate was held in the historic Middle Temple Hall, where huge Tudor and Stuart portraits looked down on the audience. The Hall is covered by the beautifully carved gable roof, comparable to that built by Cardinal Wolsey in Hampton Court. Every one of the small panels in the panelled walls had a coat of arms in it. One window was filled with large coats of arms among which was Samuel Pepy's.

The judges and O.C.'s (and their staff) occupied a raised dais so all could see them well. The witnesses were in a raised box, rather like a pulpit.

Although several news reports stated that 350 attended the debate, there were 600 seats (30 rows of 20 seats, with a gangway down the middle), and every seat was occupied. A State Luncheon was served in the Presence Chamber to the judges, O.C.'s witnesses and V.I.P.'s, together with the Americans who put up \$10,000. Others were asked to remain seated while plastic trays with a very good lunch were handed out. Then the attendees could move about in the Queen's room, the judge's powder room, the library, etc., while the judges deliberated.

Of various friends and others who visited before the Debate started, none thought there was any chance of three Appeal Judges upsetting the Establishment.<sup>1</sup> I'm very sorry to report, the Judges' opinions coincided with predictions. The Middle Temple Hall was full, and the hearing clear. At the end the chief judge went out of his way to praise the scholarship and forcefulness of Lord Alexander and the two expert witnesses, of whom the 1st was more elderly than the opposing witnesses and the 2nd was American; both were strong and I thought convincing in cross-examination.

Now for salient points expressed in the Debate.

Pro-Oxford. Emphasis on the 7,200 words occurring first in Shakespeare and the extraordinary number of words coined from Latin/Greek. Oxford's apparent use of untranslated Latin/Greek/French originals. Repeated emphasis on expert tennis-terms. Intimate knowledge, of course, of European cities, etc., also of law, medicine, music, horses, falconry, folk-lore, languages, gardening, sport, court circles, hunting, navigation, etc. . . . This was countered by Stratfordian-speakers with the usual hypotheses about Shaxper's travel, being a lawyer's clerk, etc; the usual arguments about plays alleged to have been written after Oxford's death, e.g. *Tempest* (well countered by Oxfordians but perhaps not firmly enough: they could have spent more time in using the fine pp. 388-90, Ogburn); *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar* also quoted pro-Shaxper. Have you found additional items to combat Stratfordians on this point which apparently was one which tipped the judges' opinions? The will & signatures on it and three other MSS. were well argued but also well countered. The will was allegedly amended two months later to deal with the effect of Judith's marriage, when, according to Stratfordian-speakers, Shaxper "took the opportunity, when amending, to insert the 26s.8d. bequests to the "fellows". There was a specific reference to Ogburn, p. 385, but nearby coughing blurred the point, which I missed.

Pro-Stratford. Frankly, I was not sufficiently impressed to jot down any special anti-Oxford point, but I thought Sydney Kentridge was slightly more persuasive than Lord Alexander, and he very frequently addressed the judges as 'My Lords', where Lord A. seldom did, and Kentridge seemed to have done more memorizing of his stuff, not reading nearly everything as Lord A. did. I believe that speaking without reading notes led to his being regarded as more confident, whereas I would hazard the guess that he knew he was on tricky ground and worked harder in advance. The 40-year-old Prof. Honigmann, although not a strong personality, knew his stuff and scored somewhat under cross-examination.

Judges' opinions. Lord Ackner. (A very lucid speech.)

(1) Why was Oxford not thought of earlier — it took centuries before Looney (which fortunately he pronounced Loney) the schoolmaster proposed de Vere?

(2) Thought it was 'unthinkable' that such a secret should have been so closely kept (despite Oxfordian evidence that de Vere was one of a closely-knit circle).

(3) Was influenced by the juxtaposition of Shakespeare and Oxford in Meres' terming them the best writers of tragedies and comedies — could not accept they were one and the same person.

(4) Said that Dr Ware himself admitted that Shaxper was 'actor-manager', so thought that was in favour of "Shakespeare", who as such would have daily contact with fellow actors, with whom it would have been impossible to keep up the so-alleged pseudonym, and that Aubrey would probably have scented a secret well-kept.

(5) Greene made his statement while dying, and thus would not have been a party to a pseudonym.\*

<sup>1</sup> One report indicated that after deliberating only 30 minutes, the Judges returned their verdicts by reading from written manuscripts. Another report stated that one judge reasoned, in effect, that: "Oxford was a failed soldier, failed courtier, failed poet, failed husband, and if he was one at all, a failed playwright!"

Other judges' views.

- (1) Henry Chettle's Apology was not pro-Oxford;
- (2) Impossible to have suppressed secret because of Walsingham having so many spies;
- (3) Many supporters of Oxford because 'Englishmen love a lord' (weak). (Nobody mentioned the Wivenhoe mark, tower, beacon.)

\*(Ed. Note: Evidently Lord Ackner was so misinformed as to believe that Greene used the pseudonym, "Shakespeare," in Groats-worth of Wit. By serendipitous coincidence, see quotations from Greene and Nash at p.8.)

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**"Home Challenge For the Bard"**  
(Newspaper cutting from England)

In a move which will raise eyebrows of Shakespearians throughout the world, plans are afoot to open a museum in Stratford-upon-Avon which will present William Shakespeare as a fraud.

The group behind the scheme believes the Elizabethan actor's greatest contribution to our literature was to lend his name to a famous anonymous author. Actor-director Ken Campbell, its organizer, envisages a theatrical exhibition: "One of the rooms, for instance, will feature an actor playing Francis Bacon, sitting at a desk and putting the finishing touches to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*."

There are at least 50 claimants to be the real Bard, including the Earls of Southampton and Oxford and Sir Walter Raleigh. It is hoped that the museum will be self-financing, with visitors being charged 2 [pounds] a head, and already approaches are being made to coach companies which daily take thousands of tourists through Stratford. Backing the scheme is author John Michell, who considers existing tourist attractions, such as Ann Hathaway's Cottage, "entirely spurious."

Stratford Council Insisted yesterday: "We don't feel there is any need to comment on this." But since a committed Baconian once tried to sue the owners of Shakespeare's birthplace under the Trade Descriptions Act, I suspect this one could be in for a long run.

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**SUFFOLK'S HEAD AND ROYAL BEHAVIOR**

by  
Peter R. Moore

In Act IV, Scene i of *2 Henry VI*, William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk and lover of Queen Margaret, is beheaded. In Scene iv Margaret brings his head to a conference at the palace, where she weeps over and embraces it. Margaret's behavior is denounced as unqueenly in *Motiveless Malignity* by Louis Auchincloss (p. 107), who adduces her misconduct as evidence that Shakespeare was ignorant on the subject of royal deportment (see also p. 256, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* by Charlton Ogburn). But the unhistorical incident of Suffolk's head probably derives from an event during Shakespeare's lifetime.

In 1574 the French Court was convulsed by a treason plot that involved two Princes of the Blood, but only two lesser figures, Joseph de La Mole and Hannibal de Cocconas, were punished. They were tortured, tried, and beheaded. These men were, respectively, the lovers of Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre and of the Duchess of Nevers. A few hours after the executions the two heads disappeared, and it was said that Margaret's chamberlain brought them to the two ladies who "wept over them that night and then had them enbalméd and placed in jeweled caskets" (p. 120, *Marquerite of Valois* by E.R. Chamberlin; see also pp.68-74, *Queen of Hearts* by Charlotte Haldane and the Calendar of State Papers). Whether this story is true is not at issue; the point is that it was told, and its similarity to *2 Henry VI* is striking.

In both cases there is a queen named Margaret who is French, and who receives the head of her decapitated lover in order to weep over it. There is also the resemblance between the names de la Pole and de La Mole. The likelihood that Shakespeare had the executions of 1574 in his mind when he wrote *2 Henry VI* is

strengthened by the fact that he knew a good deal about Margaret of Valois and her husband Henry of Navarre (later Henry IV of France); *Love's Labour's Lost* is based on an episode in their lives. Also, the fate of de La Mole was of interest to the English Court as he had charmed Queen Elizabeth on an embassy in 1572. She unsuccessfully interceded on his behalf through her ambassador to France, who also expressed her regrets after the execution.

The Earl of Oxford was at Elizabeth's Court at the times of de La Mole's embassy and execution, and he visited the French Court in early 1575, thus being well placed to hear the story of Queen Margaret and de La Mole's head.

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## TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY ON THE SHAKESPEARE CONTROVERSY TO BE BROADCAST

by  
Charlton Ogburn

According to the latest information now available, a 52-minute treatment of the controversy over the identity of Shakespeare will be broadcast on public television stations in the U.S. and on Channel 4 in the U.K. Over here the program will be offered on "Frontline," which airs on Tuesday evenings and hence may be expected to be shown on April 18th. Yorkshire Television is the chief producer, with Kevin Sim as director but with Nicholas Rosen, an independent producer of London, and Al Austin of WCCO-TV of Minneapolis as co-producers. The event should prove history-making.

The idea of such a documentary goes back to the spring of 1985, when Jill Marshall of the B.B.C. and John C. Mucci, a director/producer of commercial documentaries in Connecticut, felt that the case for Oxford as Shakespeare was strong enough to give such an idea great promise. Ms. Marshall, however, shortly left the B.B.C. to set up on her own, which naturally made such an expensive undertaking out of the question for her. The heavy costs of producing such a program proved to be more than Mr. Mucci could shoulder at the time — i.e., a time of marriage and the birth of two children.

It was, as I understand it, Nicholas Rosen who conceived the present project and got it under way. I first heard from him in November 1987, when he was undertaking to obtain permission to plumb the Stratford monument one way or another, at the cost of considerable and continuing effort. He and I were in communication from time to time by telephone and mail. I take it that circumstances compelled him to associate others in the project and let the principal role pass to Yorkshire Television with Al Austin also coming in to take a leading hand.

The first time I met Mr. Austin and Kevin Sim, last October, a great deal of footage had already been shot. Charles Vere, to become the Earl of Burtford the next month, had been very effective on camera as the descendant of the 15th and 19th Earls of Oxford and of Sir Francis and Horatio Vere, and Enoch Powell, a former Cabinet Minister and long-time member of Parliament and a potent skeptic of the claims made for the Stratfordian, was captured on film in Stratford, where he did an excellent job, I was told. Then there was A.L. Rowse, who turned in a most convincing performance as A.L. Rowse. Al Austin, who has been the soul of consideration and solicitude in the numerous telephone calls I have had from him, told me that upon their journey to Castle Hedingham they had met with discouraging weather but that at the end the sun had broken through and given them some dramatic shots.

My first meeting with Mr. Austin and Mr. Sim took place in the hospital in Jacksonville in which I was propped up in bed. I was astonished by the conscientiousness that would bring them all that way to see me, as it had, I discovered, taken them to New Orleans for pictures of a riverboat to serve as a background for Mark Twain's observations on the authorship. We talked for nearly an hour and a half before I had to be wheeled into surgery and for about an equal length of time after I had been brought forth and had come out of the anesthesia. They struck me as well-informed and intelligent questioners and very likeable.

Our next meeting was at my home in Beaufort, South Carolina. Al Austin and Nick Rosen came over on the evening of January 11th, having just arrived via the Savannah airport, and we discussed the filming planned for the morrow; the rest of the seven-man team — Kevin Sim and his four technicians — were arriving later that night. The team spent the 12th and half the 13th putting me through my paces on camera and tape-recorder. The procedure was for Al Austin, off camera, to put questions to me for me to answer, rephrasing the questions in the form of statements introducing my replies, which often I neglected to do, as occasionally I would unconsciously look over at the camera, as I was not supposed to do. For part of the time Al was replaced by Kevin Sim. Naturally a great deal more film was exposed than could be used. One thing I hope will be cut is my

response when I was asked to quote something from Shakespeare that illustrated the depth of depression into which, it would seem, Oxford would be driven by his terrible fate as a writer. I launched into what is to me the most powerful statement of utter nihilism in all literature, the "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" speech of Macbeth's but began to break down before I could finish and had to explain apologetically that my long illness had left me extremely weak. For the rest, Vera and I greatly enjoyed the stay of the six Britishers and one Minnesotan, finding them all appealing and excellent company. They, for their part, said they thought the filming a distinct success.

From Beaufort the team flew back to Washington to interview Prof. Samuel Schoenbaum for the documentary. How troublesome he may prove to be, with no one to rebut him, remains to be seen. I do know that in response to the assertion I had made that no one other than the inscriber of the burial register in Stratford had paid any attention to Shakspeare's death, Prof. Schoenbaum cited the case of William Basse, but Nick — a tall young man of energy and drive — slipped out and came back with the report that Basse's elegy on the Stratfordian had not been published until 1633. Al Austin had sent Prof. Schoenbaum a copy of *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* several months earlier, but the recipient allowed as how he had not read it (not even the entries under your name in the index, Professor?), thus sparing me the need after all these years of imputing any fairness or intellectual responsibility to him. (Incidentally, I had the satisfaction back in 1987 of locking horns with Dr. Schoenbaum on Jack Cole's talk-show on station WJNO in West Palm Beach; Mr. Cole is an excellent interviewer and apparently a solid Oxfordian who has had me on the air four times. In my encounter with Dr. Schoenbaum, I soon found myself with him in the thicket of the *Groatsworth of Wit*, the habitual refuge of challenged Stratfordians and the only one that can afford them even transitory shelter. Subsequently I tried repeatedly and in various ways to obtain a tape or transcript of the debate but without success. *Simplement, il faut croire qu'il n'existe pas!*

My conscience gives me great trouble on behalf of Nick Rosen. Having exerted himself to the utmost to gain access to the Stratford monument, he was counting on me to be present on February 21st when a Kodak team with the latest in x-ray equipment was to direct its devices on the monument. And I simply could not make it. The same physical debility that kept me from being in London for the moot court made it impossible for me to contemplate such a trip. After four surgeries I simply could not summon up the strength for it. In the upshot I suppose my presence would have been of little consequence. Al Austin telephoned from Leeds that after hours aimed at the target, the x-ray machine found only solid concrete beneath the bust; the box-like structure above the bust it could not reach.

Perhaps the reader will permit me to digress here temporarily from the subject of the documentary film. The most insistent question about the monument has, to me, long been this. Inasmuch as the orthodox Shakespeareans have never been able to account convincingly for the total disappearance of the poet-dramatist's manuscripts, including those of which no authentic printed copy exists, would they either explain what the inscription on the monument meant, if it did not mean that the corpus of Shakespeare's works was within, or actively support a thorough search of the monument since to overlook any chance to bring so incomparable a treasure to light would be criminal — and of course no desecration, as of a burial chamber, would be involved since no one pretends that a body is or could be contained in the monument. And not one professor has been heard from. The entire lot of them would rather consign Shakespeare's manuscripts to oblivion than concede that anything underhand could have been at work in the attribution of his plays. After many years of subjection to them, I have to say, taking account of the multifarious advantages that are and have been theirs, I have never known as contemptible a crew as the academicians who people the field of the humanities.

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### "Shakespeare's aristocratic origins"

by  
Joseph Sobran\*

I haven't seen the new production of Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" in New York, but one reviewer writes that it "makes no attempt to disguise the play's antidemocratic bias." I generally avoid performances of Shakespeare, because actors and directors almost always mangle the plays. But when reviewers are this imperceptive, I'm tempted to boycott even the reviews.

Granted, "Coriolanus" isn't easy to understand. But Shakespeare's most profound political play deserves the

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effort. If you haven't read it, a splendid way to get acquainted with it is to listen to Richard Burton's recording of it. Coriolanus, the hero, is a Roman nobleman whose greatness as a warrior is offset by his bitter hatred of the common people. This hatred is so intense that it destroys Rome. When the plebeians force his banishment, he joins forces with Rome's enemies, the Volscians, and lays siege to his home city. Only the pleas of his wife and mother deter him; but his act of mercy brings about his own death at the hands of the Volscians.

To call the play "anti-democratic" is to confuse the attitude of the hero with that of the author. But Shakespeare is never so crude as to make his characters mere mouthpieces for his own opinions.

True, if a modern playwright were to tell the story, he'd make Coriolanus an Enemy of the Proletariat. We'd know just how to disapprove of this terrible snob. (Laurence Olivier played him as a Mussolini, hanging upside down in death.)

But Shakespeare doesn't traffic in stock attitudes. Just as "The Merchant of Venice" stays aloof from the mob hatred of the Jew, "Coriolanus" declines the temptation to cater to populist resentment. Shakespeare's respect for complexity of character is what keeps Coriolanus, like Shylock, alive through centuries of shifting popular attitudes.

The play leaves no doubt that Coriolanus' contempt for the common people is enormously destructive. But it also shows us that Coriolanus has all the makings of a great man, and his contempt is provoked by the common people's fickleness and cowardice. Nobody gets off easy in this play.

Coriolanus' flaw is that he can't understand that even the weak and humble have their dignity. He despises everything "common," including humanity. He vows to live "as if a man were author of himself, and knew no other kin." One of the people's tribunes justly accuses him, "You speak of the people as if you were a god to punish, not a man of their infirmity." Exactly right, though a rascal says it. At the play's climactic moment, Coriolanus confesses to himself, "I melt, and am not of stronger earth than others." He is himself "common" after all.

Coriolanus fails to grasp that the common is the basis, not the opposite, of the noble. Shakespeare implicitly criticizes him from a standpoint that is neither democratic nor anti-democratic, but might be called wisely aristocratic. An aristocracy without noblesse oblige is as bad as a mob.

The lofty social vantage point of "Coriolanus" tends to support the theory that the author we call Shakespeare was in fact Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Whoever he was, Shakespeare looks downward on the common people — not with contempt, but with humor, affection and some apprehension. Unlike Ben Jonson, who caricatured aristocrats, Shakespeare, one senses, is always at home among the nobility; he finds his comic stereotypes at the lower end of the social scale.

To see this, consider one of his fine comic characters — Dogberry, the blundering magistrate of "Much Ado About Nothing." Dogberry is as silly and self-important as Mr. Bumble in "Oliver Twist." The difference is that Dickens hates Bumble, because Dickens has known from experience what it is to be at the mercy of a Bumble, and can't resist taking him down a peg. But there is no anger in Shakespeare's portrayal of Dogberry; he observes him from far above, with sheer amusement and no moral indignation that such a man should wear "a little brief authority."

Shakespeare is less of a snob than Dickens. He is too confident of his own social position to be distracted by petty status competition. And he knows that the noblest thing a nobleman can do is to promote social harmony. That's why it's a mistake to think he shares Coriolanus' "antidemocratic" passion, which — as Shakespeare himself shows us — leads to tragedy.

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## WHY ANONYMITY?

(The following is an excerpt from Chapter 2 in Claude W. Sykes's *Alias William Shakespeare*, printed in 1947. Mr. Sykes's book is an exposition of the Rutland authorship theory. The Editor cannot present the pro-Rutland portions of the following in a manner consistent with his editorial position, and these portions have accordingly been deleted. But members will be encouraged by Mr. Sykes's invaluable contribution in gathering so conveniently a great many Elizabethan references to the practice of literary anonymity.)

Anyone putting forward the theory that Shakespeare was not the actor, William Shakspeare, but some unknown person who used him as a dummy, must face the question: Why should such a person have desired to conceal his identity? It is a question our Sherlock Holmes would naturally ask himself when he had received his commission.



ury, there are authors who for various good reasons of their own adopt a pen-  
es are generally known to the reading public. But in the sixteenth century, there  
y an author might find it absolutely essential to conceal his identity.  
distinction. As instanced in the previous chapter, there are grounds indicating that  
a member of the aristocracy. But John Selden (1584-1654) informs us that —  
print verses. He may write them to please himself, but to publish them is foolish."  
desirous of submitting his literary efforts to the acid test of public opinion rather than  
a select circle of friends was bound to do so anonymously or under a pen-name.  
his identity too thoroughly; for instance, all literary circles of Queen Elizabeth's days  
poet styling himself "E.O." or "E. of O." was Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. But he  
and that was the main thing.  
cs had to be even more circumspect if he wished to deviate from strictly orthodox  
s did not appeal to Queen Elizabeth, and any author who displeased her had to take  
ayward went to the Tower for his biography of Henry IV, which included an account of  
Elizabeth did not think the deposition of a monarch was a proper theme for her loyal  
1597, Thomas Nash suffered imprisonment for his play, "The Isle of Dogs," which the  
s.  
reed that Shakespeare had the habit of putting his friends and other well-known  
s. By disclosing his real name to the public, he would have created an intolerable

anonymous authorship was quite a common practice in Shakespeare's time. The  
a, sums up the situation in his "Farewell to Folly":  
to write or publish anything in print which, for their calling and gravity being loathe to  
imphlets pass under their own names, get some other to set his name to their verses.  
le proud by his underhand brokerage, and he that cannot write true English without the  
h churches must needs make himself the father of interludes."  
bout this anonymity, too, for in his preface to Greene's "Menaphon," he says:  
tlemen have vaunted their pens in private devices and tricked up a company of taffeta  
vers."

objection to a man of title putting his name to a book on some serious sober subject,  
es. Bacon, for instance, gave no offence when he stated on the title-page that his "The  
of King Henry the Seventh" was "written by the Right Honourable Francis Lord Verulam,  
." But a peer who wrote frivolous literature, such as plays, had to be far more careful. One  
ded his secret so well that only very few of his contemporaries knew it, and they kept  
am Stanley, sixth Earl of Derby.  
contacts with the stage before he succeeded to the title because his elder brother, Lord  
was patron of a company that played at the Rose Theatre. He may have started his literary  
this company, but if he did so, neither the manager nor the actors gave him away. Perhaps  
ware of his activities. How, then, do we know that he was a playwright?  
Elizabeth's court were objects of great interest to the many spies employed by the Vatican and  
Naturally, these agents wanted to find out which prominent persons could be induced to  
rder the Queen or turn Quislings in the event of a Spanish invasion. Therefore, they watched  
every nobleman in London very closely.  
of 1599, Elizabeth's intelligence service intercepted a letter written by a spy named George  
n Humfredo Galdelli in Venice. It contained news of the activities of various highly-placed  
tence ran:

Derby is busye in penning comydies for the common plaiers."  
authorities found no reason to suspect anything seditious in Derby's comedies. No action was  
t, and his secret authorship remained undisclosed until it was revealed some time in the last  
jured in the entry for June 30th, 1599, in the Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series.  
gth of this entry, some people have tried to prove that Derby was Shakespeare, but it can be  
was not the case. We do not know what he wrote, but it would not be unreasonable to suggest  
author of "Lochrine," "The Life and Death of Thomas, Lord Cromwell" and the "London Puritan." At  
plays were erroneously imputed to Shakespeare because they were entitled "by W.S." But these  
nd equally well for William Stanley.  
to first wrote anonymously and then styled himself William Shake-speare was not so happy in his  
ad not been at work for many years before some of his literary contemporaries began to scent a

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mystery. Thus, in 1598, we find Joseph Hall mentioning in his "Byting Satyres" a poet and dramatist whom he calls Labeo and compares to a cuttlefish hiding in "the black cloud of his own vomiture" when in fear of detection. Hall's comment is:

"Who list complain of wronged faith or fame  
When he may shift it to another's name?"

John Marston, another satirist of the period, also has something to say about this Labeo which identifies him definitely as the author of "Venus and Adonis," for in his poem, "Pygmalion's Image," he writes:

"So Labeo did complain his love was stone,  
Obdurate, flinty, so relentless none."

This is a reference to lines 199 and 200 of "Venus and Adonis":

"Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel?  
Nay, more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth."

Ben Jonson was groping out after the real author when he wrote "The Poetaster" in 1601. It contains indications that he suspected Shakespeare's connections with the law. This play is Jonson's attempt to forestall an attack he believed Dekker and Marston about to make on him. The main plot deals with the intrigues of Crispinus (Marston) and Demetrius (Dekker) against Horace (Jonson) and their punishment by the Emperor Augustus. But there is also a sub-plot dealing with the fate of the law student, Ovid, who writes plays and poems. This has a historical basis because the real Ovid was originally intended for the law and is known to have written a play entitled "Medea"...Moreover, the identification of Johnson's "Ovid" with Shakespeare would have been apparent to any literary contemporary familiar with those words of Meres:

"The sweet, witty soul of Ovid lives in the mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare."

In the first scene, Ovid senior, who is a nobleman, says to his son:

"I hear of a tragedy of yours coming for the common players, called Medee."

Whereupon the son protests his anonymity:

"I am not known unto the open stage,  
Nor do I traffic in their theatres."

This reflects the sentiments of the Elizabethan nobility; such things could only be done anonymously. But the mere mention of Medea would awaken memories of "Titus Andronicus" in contemporary playgoers' minds, because she kills her children and makes their unsuspecting father, Jason, eat their flesh. Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus kills Tamora's two sons and serves up their flesh at a banquet he gives to their mother.

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". . . a long foreground somewhere."

It we find that a man knows a thing we must assume that he had it to learn. If he handles his knowledge readily and appropriately we must assume an intimacy born of an habitual interest, woven into the texture of his mind. If he shows himself skillful in doing something we must assume that he attained his skill by practice. And therefore, if he first comes before the world with a masterpiece in any art, exhibiting an easy familiarity with the technique of the craft and a large fund of precise information in any department, we may conclude that preceding all this there must have lain years of secret preparation, during which he was accumulating knowledge, and by practice in his art, gaining skill and strength for the decisive plunge; storing up, elaborating and perfecting his productions so as to make them in some degree worthy of that ideal which ever haunts the imagination of the supreme artist.

Most of the other poets differ from Shakespeare in that they furnish us with collections of their juvenile productions in which, though often enough poor stuff, we may trace the promise of their maturer genius. Apart from this value, much of it is hardly entitled to immortality. Amongst the work of Shakespeare the authorities, however, ascribe priority in time to "Love's Labour's Lost;" and what Englishman that knows his Shakespeare

would care to part with this work? We could easily mention quite a number of Shakespearean plays of even high rank that would more willingly be parted with than this one. It would, however, be perfectly gratuitous to argue that this work is a masterpiece.

Masterpieces, however, are the fruits of matured powers. Dante was over fifty years of age before he finished his Immortal work; Milton about fifty-five when he completed "Paradise Lost." Quite a long list might be made out illustrating this principle in works of even the second order; Cervantes at sixty producing "Don Quixote," Scott at forty-three giving us the first of the Waverley Novels, Defoe at fifty-eight publishing "Robinson Crusoe"; Fielding at forty-two giving "Tom Jones," and Manzoni, at forty "I Promessi Sposi." Or, if we turn to Shakespeare's own domain, the drama, we find that Moliere, after a lifetime of dramatic enthusiasm and production, gave forth his masterpieces between the ages of forty and fifty, his greatest work "Tartuffe" appearing just at the middle of that period (age forty-five), whilst Goethe's "Faust" was the outcome of a long literary lifetime, its final touches being given only a few months before his death at the age of eighty-two.

Drama, in its supreme manifestation, that is to say as a capable and artistic exposition of our many-sided human nature and not mere "inexplicable dumb-shows and noise," is an art in which, more than in others, mere precocity of talent will not suffice for the creation of masterpieces. In this case genius must be supplemented by a wide and intense experience of life and much practice in the technical work of staging plays. Poetic geniuses who have not had this experience, and have cast their work in dramatic form, may have produced great literature, but not great dramas. Yet, with such a general experience as these few facts illustrate, we are asked to believe that a young man — William Shakspeare was but twenty-six in the year 1590, which marks roughly the beginning of the Shakespearean period — began his career with the composition of masterpieces without any apparent preparation, and kept pouring out plays spontaneously at a most amazing rate. He appears before us at the age of twenty-nine as the author of a superb poem of no less than twelve hundred lines, and leaves no trace of those slight youthful effusions by means of which a poet learns his art and develops his powers. If, however, we can disabuse our minds of fantastic notions of genius, regard the Shakespearean dramas as anonymous, and look at them with the eyes of common sense, we shall be inclined rather to view the outpouring of dramas from the year 1590 onwards as the work of a more matured man, who had had the requisite intellectual and dramatic preparation, and who was elaborating, finishing off and letting loose a flood of dramas that he had been accumulating and working at during many preceding years.

When in 1855 Walt Whitman gave to the world his "Leaves of Grass," Emerson greeted the work and its writer in these words: "I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed ... I greet you at the beginning of a great career, *which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere.*" This concluding surmise was merely common sense, and, as the world now knows, perfectly true. What is wanted is to apply the same principle and the same common sense to work of a higher order, and to recognize that if by the year 1592, by which time we are assured that the stream of Shakespearean drama was in full flood, Shakespeare was manifesting an exceptional facility in the production of works that were at once great literature and great stage plays, there had been "a long foreground somewhere."  
(Excerpt from "Shakespeare" Identified by J. Thomas Looney).

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#### TRIBUTE TO DR. S. COLUM GILFILLAN

by  
Carol S. Lipman

At the recent Annual meeting of the SOS, a special donation of \$5,000 was bequeathed from the estate of S. Colum Gilfillan by his daughter Barbara Crowley of Pasadena, California. Barbara is a Trustee of the SOS and the secretary of the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable in Los Angeles. As Barbara Crowley was unable to attend the meeting in Richmond, the check and tribute was presented by Carol Sue Lipman, founder and president of the Roundtable.

Dr. S. Colum Gilfillan was a very special and accomplished man who was a longstanding member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and one of its vice presidents. Born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1889, his parents were missionaries with the Indian Reservation in Minnesota. The young Gilfillan joined the army at age 19 and was sent to France where he developed an interest in languages, and later studied Latin, Greek, learned French, Spanish, Italian and German.

He attended the University of Pennsylvania and received a Master's degree from Columbia in Sociology. He later received a doctorate also from Columbia who published his thesis in 1935 in two parts: "Inventing the Ship" and "Sociology of Invention." He next became Curator of Ships at the Museum of Science in Chicago.

Later, working at the University of Chicago as a professor of Sociology, he met William Fielding Ogburn, a fellow professor who was the brother of Charlton Ogburn, Sr. and thus began his interest in the authorship and Edward DeVere. Barbara Crowley remembers many Sunday night discussions at the supper table which she tried to ignore until she many years later discovered "This Star of England" and realized her father was right.

In 1964 while working for the United States Patent System, they published his book entitled "Invention of the Patent System." In later years in his spare time, he did research for his final book entitled "Rome's Ruin By Lead Poison" which will be published posthumously. For this special book, he travelled to Europe to gather ancient pieces of bones to analyze their lead content. These bone samples are so valuable that they will be stored in the Smithsonian Institution. His written articles on lead poison were published between 1962-1965 and at that time made world news reports.

In the 1970's Dr. Gilfillan moved to California and began having gatherings of would-be Oxfordians, particularly whenever SOS President Horn came to town. During those senior years, Dr. Gilfillan often gave lectures at the Senior Citizen's Center in Santa Monica and also held gatherings at the UCLA Faculty Club. He had lived a rewarding and accomplished life when he passed away in February 1987 at the ripe age of 97.

Barbara Gilfillan Crowley hopes that her father's bequeathed check to the SOS will be used for some special project to honor his memory.

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### "For a Vere and Herbert's wife"

by  
Isabel Holden

Susan Vere, youngest daughter of the 17th Earl of Oxford, married Philip Herbert, Duke of Montgomery, one of the "Most Noble and Incomparable Palre of Brethren" of the First Folio of Shakespeare. His mother, the Dowager Duchess of Montgomery, was patroness of Ben Jonson and aunt of Lady Mary Wroth, nee Mary Sidney. Mary was a lady-in-waiting at Queen Elizabeth's court and a close friend of Susan Vere. At one time it was rumored that she would marry the 18th Earl of Oxford, Henry Vere.

However, she did not, but married Sir Robert Wroth. His death left her in financial difficulties and her life was then a tumultuous series of adventures as mistress of William Herbert, patroness of writers, a prolific writer herself and very involved with and admired by intellectuals of the period. Her poetry included a very long allegorical poem entitled *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*. The *dramatis personae* of some of the masques Ben Jonson wrote for the court list both Lady Mery and Lady Susan as taking part.

Josephine A. Roberts, who teaches at Louisiana State University, has done extensive research of Lady Mary Wroth and has published a book of her poems prefaced with an extremely interesting biography.\* Included there is an epitaph by William Browne of Tavistock, composed in memory of the Countess of Montgomery who died in 1629 of smallpox. In this poem can be found the strong echoes of Shakespeare's sonnets and of Ben Jonson's First Folio poem, *To the Memory of my Beloved Author*.

Though we trust the earth with thee,  
We will not with thy memory;  
Mines of brass or marble shall  
Speak nought of thy funeral;  
They are verier dust than we,  
And do beg a history:  
In thy name there is a tomb,  
If the world can give it room;  
For a Vere and Herbert's wife  
Outspeaks all tombs, outlives all life.

William Browne of Tavistock

\*The Poems of Lady Wroth, Edited with Introduction and Notes by Josephine A. Roberts, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge and London, 1983

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## The Stratfordian was a "no-show"

Isabel Holden initiated a midterm course in January 1989 on the Shakespeare authorship question at Smith College. Nine students signed up for five stimulating sessions. She arranged for both sides to be presented and encouraged the students to do their own research in books she had put on reserve in the Smith College Library. In addition, Charles Boyle and Betty Sears presented the case for Oxford and an English professor from the University of Massachusetts agreed to present the case for Shakspeare. While Ms. Holden did not plan to disclose the fact that traditional scholars frequently avoid public discussion of the question, it turned out that her students were exposed to that fact. The University of Massachusetts professor failed to show up on the appointed day. There was no reason given, just a "no-show."

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"... it would be far better for the Stratfordian theory if we had no biographical details at all."

Another extraordinary fact in this amazing life is that, with the exception of the *Plays*, and *Venus and Adonis*, and *The Lucrece*, and the *Sonnets*, and the puzzle-poem, *The Phoenix and The Turtle*, Shakespeare appears to have written nothing, unless we are to accept (the doggerel on the gravemarker) as his indeed! If "Shakespeare" was but a *nom de plume* this need not excite surprise, for it would merely mean that the author, whoever he was, cared to publish those plays and poems only under that pseudonym. But if Shakspeare was indeed Shakespeare it does seem unaccountable that he should have written no lines to friends or patrons, no elegies on famous men or women of his day, no lyrics other than those, which appear in the dramas, no epigrams, no epitaphs, no epithalamiums. Take Jonson's case, for example. Jonson wrote hundreds of poems, which in that day were classed as "epigrams." He wrote lines to his master, Camden, lines on the death of the Countess of Pembroke, lines to "Lord Bacon" on his birthday, poetical addresses many, to friends, and patrons and personages of distinction, and a large number of lyrics and occasional pieces. In these poems, and in his prologues and epilogues, Jonson is continually giving us broad indications of his own personality; Shakespeare never gives us a glimpse of his, except it be in those enigmatical "Sonnets among his private friends." His plays "did take Eliza and our James"; yet the great Queen dies, and he sheds no melodious tear, weaves no wreath of song to lay upon her tomb. Prince Henry dies, "than which," says Grosert, "no death since Sydney's had so moved the heart of the nation as none evoked such splendid sorrow from England's foremost names - with one prodigious exception - in 'melodious teares.'" And the one prodigious exception is Shakespeare. But why should William Shakspeare, of Stratford, have played the part of "William the Silent"? No plausible answer to this question has ever been suggested.

But, surely, when this great poet died there was a great burst of lamentation, a great concert of praise! Surely all his brother minstrels who survived him vied with each other to write his elegy. Alas! Again silence - the silence that can be felt. "His death was greeted with a chorus of elegiac and panegyric verses, poured forth by the best poets of the moment," writes Mr. J.A. Symonds, but he is speaking not of Shakespeare, but of Jonson. How different was the case of Shakespeare! It was not till seven years after the death of Shakspeare that "Shakespeare's" elegy was written by this Ben Jonson whose own death was thus "greeted with a chorus of elegiac and panegyric verse." It is true that one William Basse, a year before that (1622) had written some curious lines, in which he bids:

Renowned Spencer lie a thought more nigh  
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie  
A little nearer Spenser, to make room  
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold tomb.

as though he thought Shakespeare was going to be buried in Westminster Abbey, as most assuredly Shakespeare ought to have been. But where is the "chorus of elegiac and panegyric verses, poured forth by the best poets of the moment?" And once more "Echo answers 'where?'" It was not till the First Folio appeared

in 1623 that a tribute was paid to his memory. Why was this? Was it because "the friends of the Muses" were, for the most part, aware that Shakespeare had not died with Shakspeare? Did Jonson perchance think that his idea might be realized when he wrote -

What a sight it were  
To see thee in our waters yet appear,  
To make those flights upon the banks of Thames  
Which so did take Eliz and our James?

Be the explanation what it may, the fact that Shakspeare should have practically remained seven years in his grave "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung" is one of those extraordinary things which we find in Shakspeare's life alone - extraordinary, that is, if Shakspeare be Shakespeare; quite intelligible on the contrary hypothesis.

Sixteen plays of Shakespeare were published in Shakspeare's lifetime: but it appears that not one of them was published with his sanction. "He made no audible protest," writes Mr. Lee, "when seven contemptible dramas in which he had no hand were published with his name or initials on the title-page." In 1599 William Jaggard published *The Passionate Pilgrim* with the name "W. Shakespeare" on the title page as author. There were twenty pieces in all the volumes, but only five were written by Shakespeare, the bulk of the book being by Richard Barnfield and others...

To all this must be added that, so far as we know, Shakspeare never during his life did or said anything to show that he claimed to be the author of the *Plays* and *Poems* or any of them. Among the many extraordinary things in this (on the common hypothesis) inexplicable life, this is surely one of the most extraordinary.

My last comment on the life of William Shakspeare of Stratford shall be this. Meagre as our knowledge of it is, it is yet too much. Mr. Lee's claim that we have "a mass of biographical detail which far exceeds that accessible in the case of any poet contemporary with Shakespeare" is, indeed, sufficiently ridiculous, but it would be far better for the Stratfordian theory if we had no biographical detail at all. If we knew nothing, we might imagine anything. What we do know is fatal to the case. It gives rise to the strongest possible presumption against the identity of Shakspeare the player with Shakespeare the poet. It fully explains how Whittier came to write "Whether Bacon wrote the wonderful plays or not, I am quite sure the man Shakspeare neither did or could," and how John Bright came to say, in the vigorous style that was usual with him, "Any man who believes that William Shakspeare of Stratford wrote 'Hamlet' or 'Lear' is a fool." Such strong language, however, as that used by the great tribune is to be deprecated. It should be left for High Priests and Pharisees of literature. It is better to point out with Emerson how impossible it is to marry the facts of this man's life to the works that are ascribed to him. "Other admirable men have lived lives in some sort of keeping with their thought, but this man in wide contrast." (Excerpts from *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* by G.G Greenwood)

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#### CHARLTON OGBURN'S *THE MYSTERIOUS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*

-v-

#### JAMES C. McMANAWAY'S *THE AUTHORSHIP OF SHAKESPEARE\**

##### McManaway:

Within a few years of his death [1616] Shakespeare was bringing fame to Stratford.

##### Ogburn:

The facts as we know them are quite different. The "notoriety...which the memory of William Shakespeare has brought to Stratford," says the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th edition) "sprang into strong growth only towards the end of the 18th century." Our information is that during the two generations following the death of "Will. Shakspeare gent," as the burial register had it, four or five persons finding themselves in Stratford were led to connect the town with the writer, probably each of them because of finding there a "neat monument," as one of

\* Folger Booklet, Washington, D.C. Folger Shakespeare Library, 1966; 2nd ed., 1978.



them, a Lieutenant Hammond, put it in 1634, "to that famous English poet, Mr. William Shakespeare."

#### McManaway:

Plays written for the public stage (during Shakespeare's time) were not considered literature.

#### Ogburn:

Rowse reports that "by 1600 visitors regarded the London theater as a chief glory of the Nation." McManaway writes under the Folger imprint that "Plays written for the public stage were not considered literature" and quotes from the title page of one play quarto, "We know these things to be nothing." He cannot, however, ignore Francis Meres's testimony on the first introduction of Shakespeare's name as that of a playwright. After giving Shakespeare high rank among the poets of the day, Meres (the reader will recall) compared him with the Roman dramatists Plautus and Seneca as being preeminent in the nation for comedy and tragedy alike, then declared, "As Epius Stolo said, that the Muses would speak with Plautus' tongue, if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine filed phrases, if they would speak English." In other words, Shakespeare's plays were regarded as literature of the highest order and McManaway stood flatly contradicted. What was he to do? Simple: he reduces the statement of Meres's I have quoted to read only "The Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine filed phrases if they would speak English," then has it follow directly upon what Meres wrote of Shakespeare as a poet. The comparison with Plautus and Seneca the Folger curator removes from its original place and puts last, so that it is no longer as the English equivalent of the outstanding Roman dramatist that Shakespeare teaches the Muses to speak in his fine filed phrase.

#### John Aubrey in a memorandum on Shakespeare reproduced by E.K. Chambers:

The more to be admired (quia) was not a company keeper lived in Shoreditch, wouldn't be debauched & if invited to writ: he was in paine.

#### Ogburn:

Scholars of the Stratford camp characteristically change the punctuation of the note - among them Schoenbaum, in his *Shakespeare's Lives* - by slipping a comma in after "to" in order to have the sentence read "wouldn't be debauched. And if invited to, writ: he was in paine." Ivor Brown adds a comma after "and" as well as one after "to." McManaway revises it more liberally, though retaining the quotation marks to disavow any alteration between them. He writes that "About 1681 Christopher Beeston told John Aubrey, among other things, that Shakespeare had been a schoolmaster." (Having just told us that "Christopher was a fellow member of Shakespeare's company in 1598," McManaway would have Aubrey's Informant a good hundred years old.) "He was also Aubrey's authority for the statement that Shakespeare' . . . wouldn't be debauched. And if invited to, wrote [that] he was in paine." (The bracketed "that" is Dr. McManaway's).

The academicians are having the note tell us that Shakespeare would receive invitations to be debauched and - recovering, one must suppose, from his astonishment, although this perhaps diminished with repetition - would write declining on the grounds that he was in pain. The picture thus conjured up, of carousal so formalized as to call for written responses to invitations to take part, presumably also written, would require revision in one's idea of tavern life in Elizabethan London. But Aubrey's note as penned - viz., without the comma - appears actually to say that when invited to write, "Shakespeare" claimed to be in pain as a reason for begging off. And it does seem that whereas one might well sometimes plead a previous engagement or press of work as a reason for foregoing an orgy, a pain in the hand or arm would be the one grounds on which a refusal to demonstrate one's penmanship could well be based.

#### McManaway:

(Stratfordian's claim, in the words of Louis B. Wright, "We know even less about the lives of many writers and some men of affairs than we know about Shakespeare. In an attempted corroboration of that claim, McManaway summarizes all he considers important about Edmund Spenser but omits many of the more basic facts about Spenser's life and also writes that).

...no personal letter to or from him [Spenser], has come to light and not one line of poetry in his handwriting.

#### Ogburn:

I am in no doubt as to [McManaway's] object. That is plain from the facts he pointedly does not tell us: first, that part of Spenser's correspondence with Harvey has not only come to light but was published by Harvey himself and may be read in any edition of Spenser's complete works; second, that if no line of poetry in his handwriting has been found, it is just possible that the fire which totally destroyed his home three months before

his death, about which McManaway is mute, may have had something to do with it.

The ethics that distinguish Shakespearean orthodoxy, or the lack of them, are revealed by reviewing what McManaway does not tell us. He refrains from acknowledging that a variety of Spenser's holographs may be found in his own library in *Greg's English Literary Autographs* (Z42, G82, if the Folger would like to verify this source), including letters, which he denies exist. He conceals from us that Spenser enjoyed a long, intimate, and fruitful relationship with Gabriel Harvey, and that it was in a responsible position that he accompanied Lord Grey to Ireland ("to which he seems to have been rusticated," indeed!) He also does not let us know anything about Spenser's education; about his residing in the house of the most powerful nobleman in England; about his having had as literary patrons two of the most prominent and active men of affairs in England, both poet-knights, about the great estates in Ireland he was granted; about his literary triumph in London; about his extensive acquaintanceships in the court; about his exchange of poetical compliments with Sir Walter Raleigh; about his reception and pensioning by the Queen; about what he writes of himself and his works; or about the admiring regard in which he was held by the English society of Dublin.

In suppressing all that and more, McManaway counts upon our ignorance to enable him to get away with it. He practices upon our trust when he cites Spenser's known biography (and Raleigh's and Milton's of which he would have to suppress just as much) as grounds on which to expect nothing more from Shakespeare's than a string of mostly humdrum, or even sordid, and irrelevant episodes in which not a person of intellectual, literary, or social note appears. He would have us know no more about Spenser's death than about his life. The contrast with Shakspeare's would be too deadly. The facts withheld in *The Authorship of Shakespeare* we may come by elsewhere, however, learning that Spenser "was buried in the abbey, near the tomb of Chaucer, with a splendid funeral, at the expense of the Earl of Essex. The pall was borne by poets; and with a true poetic feeling, tributary verses by the most illustrious of his contemporaries (Shakespeare excepted), with the pens that wrote them, were thrown in to his grave. (His fellows) vied with each other in Elegiac tributes to his memory."

Over 80 years ago George G. Greenwood in his *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* inquired:

But why, we are fain to ask, do Shakespearean biographers think themselves entitled to ignore all the ordinary canons of criticism, and to accept methods which were the lives of other men concerned, would be characterised as simply dishonest?

We, likewise, are obliged to ask why The Folger Library put its imprimatur on a biography which patently confirms barrister Greenwood's accusation.

(Ed. note: These examples are by no means all of Mr. McManaway's distortions which Mr. Ogburn exposed.)

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## JOIN SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY AND RECEIVE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to document and establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the universally recognized author of the works of William Shakespeare. Each Newsletter carries articles which impart a wide range of information and commentary which the editor considers relevant to that purpose. Some articles will inevitably contain opinions, deductions and evidence which some S.O.S. members believe to be invalid, inaccurate, irrelevant, or irrational. The Newsletter is always open to letters of dissent and correction.

Student \$10.00    Annual Dues Regular \$25.00    Sustaining \$50.00 or more

The Shakespeare Oxford Society does not have any paid staff and cannot rely on one volunteer to handle all communications and process all functions. As a result, the following three addresses should be used for the respective purposes as indicated:

1. First time renewal membership dues and any outright tax deductible contributions to:  
Shakespeare Oxford Society  
P.O. Box 147  
Clarksville, Maryland 20129
2. Requests for information about memberships to:  
Stephanie Caruana  
Box 913, RR1  
Napanoch, New York 12458
3. Articles, Letters To The Editor and any other materials submitted for publication in the Newsletter  
to:  
Morse Johnson, Editor  
Suite No. 819  
105 West 4th St.  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202



Morse Johnson, Editor  
105 West 4th Street, Suite #819, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

To the Members of The Shakespeare Oxford Society:

The press commentaries on, and personal reactions to, the nationwide, outstanding April 18/89 PBS production on "Frontline" of "The Shakespeare Mystery" demonstrate that it stimulated objective interest in the Shakespeare authorship question, and undoubtedly, many times over multiplied the number of persons who now except its authenticity. Charlton Ogburn has been "deluged" with enthusiastic letters and phone calls, one of which from Karen O'Brien of WGBH to report that the response to that program has been greater than that to any other "Frontline" production this year and that they have been amazed by the extent of the press coverage.

There is not much that we, either as individuals or as a Society, can do to keep before the public the mind-opening facts and logical deductions that prestigious production publicized and which the reviews thereof succinctly and lucidly summarize. Since in my opinion, however, we should do what we can do, those reviews constitute a major portion of this Newsletter, even though, for the most part, they cover evidence with which you are familiar and, in many instances, highlight the same evidence.

I have, therefore, had extra copies printed and will mail a copy to any person (or persons) whose name and address is put on the enclosed postcard, with a note that you had so requested.

N.B.: 1. Any person who reads this Newsletter will realize that the traditional Stratfordian attribution is extensively and responsibly recognized as dubious and unverifiable.

2. High School English teachers would be most constructive recipients (see pp. 14-17 herein).

3. About a week after the "Frontline" broadcast, one of my friends affirmatively introduced the subject at a dinner party but when challenged discovered, in her words, "to my horror and embarrassment I had forgotten many of the most convincing facts."

4. The recipient might be induced to read Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. Dodd, Mead having gone out of business, that book will be distributed by E.P.M. Publications of 1003 Turkey Run Rd, McLean, Va. 22101 ((703)-442-7810).

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## *"Who Wrote Shakespeare?"*

(The Members Magazine

WGBH April 1989)

by

Al Austin

"Isn't it odd, when you think of it," Mark Twain wrote, "that you may list all the celebrated Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotchmen of modern times, clear back to the first Tudors - a list containing 500 names, shall we say, - and you can go to the histories, biographies and cyclopedias and learn the particulars of the lives of every one of them. Every one of them except one - the most famous, the most renowned - by far the most illustrious of them all - Shakespeare!" Twain went on to suggest that it was because the traditional Shakespeare "hadn't any history to record!"

Biographies of William Shakespeare of Stratford do exist - hundreds and hundreds of them. But Twain complained that they are composed of guesswork.

Precious little is known for certain about William Shakespeare. He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, got married when he was 18, had three children, left his family and went off to London. His name

was listed among actors who performed twice for the queen, and he is listed among the shareholders in the Globe Theatre. He returned to Stratford in his 40s, bought a big house, dealt in real estate and grain for a while and died in 1616. His will mentioned no plays or poems or books. Only six examples of his handwriting are known to exist: six signatures, each spelled differently. When he died, nobody seems to have noticed.

How did this small-town boy with little or no education learn so much about law and history and Italy and Latin and Greek and royalty and all the other knowledge that filled Shakespeare's plays? Well, say the biographers and historians, by keeping his eyes and ears open and by being a genius. Samuel Schoenbaum of Washington, D.C., America's foremost Shakespeare biographer, says, "There are certain things that defy rational explanation. There is something incomprehensible about genius. Shakespeare was superhuman."

Answers like that didn't satisfy Taine - or Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Sigmund Freud, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman or Henry James. All found something faulty about the man from Stratford.

And the doubts continue. New doubters are born every day. This past November, one of England's most famous politicians and classical scholars, Enoch Powell, stood contemplating the Shakespeare monument in the Stratford church. "Isn't it disgusting? It's a lie. I can't look at it."

Since the middle of the last century, nonbelievers in the Stratford man have been putting up other names as the "real" author, men (and a woman or two) who might, for a variety of reasons, have used "William Shakespeare" as a pen name: Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe. But most of these challengers have fallen by the wayside, and with such failure, the snickering from the Stratford stands has grown louder.

Then, early in the century, an English schoolmaster named J. Thomas Looney went looking for Shakespeare the way a detective might with a list of characteristics the true author would need to have had, historical fingerprints. After years of searching through old documents, Looney came up with his man: Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, who lived from 1550 to 1604.

History had all but ignored de Vere. And yet, he was the highest ranking earl in the kingdom - and brilliant, earning two masters' degrees before he was seventeen years old. And he seems to have cut a wide swath through England, France and Italy four centuries ago, was an intimate of Queen Elizabeth I, sailed off in his own ship to help battle the Spanish Armada, got himself captured by pirates, killed a man and engaged in a scandalous extramarital affair.

Looney found several poems written by de Vere under his own name when he was in his early 20s, poems Looney thought were similar to some of those attributed to Shakespeare. Looney also believed that de Vere's adventures showed up in the Shakespeare plays. For example, de Vere's guardian, Lord Burghley, the most powerful man in England, seemed to be satirized as Polonius in Hamlet.

De Vere seemed to quit writing when still a young man. But Looney was sure the writing continued under the name "William Shakespeare."

Why wouldn't de Vere have put his own name to the plays? In Looney's view, it was because playwriting for the commercial theaters was beneath the dignity of nobility. Furthermore, de Vere would have been barred from using his own name because he had inside knowledge of all the court intrigues. Powerful people, like Lord Burghley, and even Queen Elizabeth, would have been embarrassed had the public known de Vere was the author and the plays were satire. So (according to the scenario constructed by Looney and others who continued his work after he died) de Vere chose a natural pen name. The poet Gabriel Harvey had, after all, saluted him in a speech before the queen as a man whose "countenance shakes spears." Then, when de Vere's friends and relatives decided to publish the plays, long after de Vere's death, they chose as a "front man" the obscure, semiliterate, country bumpkin, Will Shakspeare of Stratford, who, Powell noted, "had the added advantage of being dead."

"Preposterous," retorted the historians and biographers and teachers of Shakespeare. De Vere could not possibly be the author (the counterattack continued); he died before some of the plays - The Tempest, for one - were written.

Although Looney announced his discovery 70 years ago, and his disciples have been digging up new evidence ever since, the general public has remained, for the most part, blissfully unaware. To find out about it, one has to read several books not found in most bookstores, or even in most libraries.

Then, in 1983, a successful author from South Carolina named Charlton Ogburn wrote an even bigger book - 900 pages - called The Mysterious William Shakespeare, skillfully explaining hundreds of

ways in which the life of deVere and the works of Shakespeare seem to meet. Ogburn and many of his readers are confident that the evidence contained in this book amounts to proof that Edward deVere was William Shakespeare. DeVere's champions have discovered that once into the fight there seems to be no way out - it becomes an obsession, a lifelong passion. Ogburn and his colleagues consider their man a heroic figure who was wronged in life and slandered through history as a libertine spendthrift. Tears fill Ogburn's eyes as he quotes lines from Hamlet and Macbeth that he believes came straight from the soul of the tormented Earl of Oxford.

There is passion on the other side of the argument, too. Historian A. L. Rowse's eyes also well with tears as he stands beside Shakespeare's grave denouncing the "bloody fools" who doubt his hero. "These are people who aren't qualified to hold an opinion," he asserts. The only thing Rowse finds wrong with the men from Stratford is that "he liked the girls too much. He was too sexy."

Rowse and his colleagues insist the evidence in favor of the orthodox view is insurmountable. The First Folio, the first collected edition of the plays, seven years after the Stratford man's death, was edited by two of his fellow actors, Heminge and Condell, men he had named in his will. And "Honest Ben" Jonson, in his poem prefacing the First Folio, called the author, "sweet swan of Avon." What's more, the Shakespeare monument in the Stratford church, erected at about the same time, clearly implies that the man it honors was a famous writer. And throughout their lives, none of the people who took part in those tributes ever let on that they were anything but what they seemed to be.

All part of the hoax, counter the anti-Stratfordians, all cooked up to disguise the author. They contend the First Folio and the Stratford inscription provide ample clues that the people behind those things were joking.

The Stratford man's supporters note that Americans are prominent in the challenge to their man. They suggest that it stems from a peculiar sort of snobbery, that some Americans can't accept the thought of a common, English schoolboy being Shakespeare.

The contest - the mystery - comes down to this: Those who believe deVere was Shakespeare must accept an improbable hoax as part of it, a conspiracy of silence involving, among others, Queen Elizabeth herself. Those who side with the Stratford man must believe in miracles.

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*"The Shakespeare Mystery: Who Was He?"*

(N.Y. Times 4/18/89)

by

Walter Goodman

"Frontline," the admirable public-affairs series that has brought us sharp reports this season on Ronald Reagan and Jesse Jackson, the troubles of Eastern Air Lines and the rain forest of Brazil, and illegal drugs and prescription drugs, takes an unaccustomed turn tonight to the 16th century. The issue explored in "The Shakespeare Mystery" is whether Shakespeare was in fact somebody named something like Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon, or whether he was somebody else, in particular Edward deVere, the 17th Earl of Oxford and an important figure in Queen Elizabeth's court. Any doubt that the matter retains urgency for some Shakespeare lovers is laid to rest at 10 tonight on Channel 13 and at 9 on Channel 49.

The case for deVere, first advanced around 1920, is put forward by Charlton Ogburn, an American and the author of "The Mysterious William Shakespeare" Enoch Powell, a Tory politician; and Charles Vere, a collateral descendant of Edward. They note the sparseness of information about the Shakespeare who is said to have lived in Stratford and find it implausible that so obscure a figure could have had the deep knowledge of court habits and political maneuverings evidenced in the works signed with his name.

By contrast they maintain, the Earl of Oxford had all the credentials, including the close acquaintanceship with hunting, riding and falconry found in Shakespeare, but he was obliged to write under a pseudonym because of his high estate and the low estate accorded to theater folk of the time. A particularly tantalizing item of unearthed evidence is a toast to deVere by a contemporary of a man whose "countenance shakes spears." Mr. Powell charges, in un-Elizabethan language, that the creation



of the Stratford Shakespeare was "e fix." He says, "It absolutely stinks."

Defenders of the Stratford Shakespeare, the focus of a considerable tourist industry, take up the gauntlet and give as good as they get. The British historian A.L. Rowse, who is testy about "all the rot that's spoken by people who should shut up," calls deVere "a most frightful lightweight." He dismisses all the applicants for Shakespeare's laurels - including Francis Bacon and Christopher Marlowe - as homosexuals, quite unlike the Shakespeare whose works show that he was "only interested in the girl."

Viewers with opinions on the dispute may not have their minds changed, but this vigorous duel, produced and directed by Kevin Sim, demonstrates that the case for Oxford, though largely circumstantial, is by no means implausible. The passion it continues to arouse is seen especially in Mr. Ogburn, whose eyes tear as he assumes the role of Horatio to deVere's Hamlet, carrying out the injunction to "report me and my cause alike to the unsatisfied."

The directness and intelligence of the hour is typical of "Frontline," which in coming weeks will be returning to the 20th century with reports on such contemporary contentions as Israel and Northern Ireland...

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*"PBS Plays Out the Debate Over the Bard"*

(Los Angeles Times, April 18, 1989)

by

Cherles Champlin

"Frontline," the excellent PBS documentary series customarily anchored by Judy Woodruff, departs from its usual diet of world crises tonight to contemplate "The Shakespeare Mystery" (9 p.m. on Channel 28 and 15, 10 p.m. on Channel 50).

The program is television's most elaborate exploration yet of the Authorship Question. Did the man from Stratford-Upon-Avon write the finest body of plays and poems in the English language, or was it a person or persons unrecognized or denied by 300-plus years of Shakespeare scholarship?

It is an inventive, balanced and engrossing look at the world's greatest literary mystery - not least because a sizeable body of believers are sure there is no mystery at all.

Specifically, guest anchor Al Austin asks, was the unknown party Edward deVere, the 17th Earl of Oxford? DeVere was first advanced as a claimant in 1920, after years of literary detective work by an English schoolmaster named Thomas Looney, in a book he called "Shakespeare Identified."

The author of the play knew law, languages, classical literature, botany, falconry, Italy (DeVere had been there; Shakespeare hadn't) as well as life in the royal court, seen from inside. The man from Stratford left no books, no mention of his works, and his death occasioned nothing more than an entry in the parish registry.

Doubts about the Stratford man arose as early as the 18th Century. Francis Bacon was an early alternative favorite, along with Christopher Marlowe and even Queen Elizabeth, who wrote splendid sonnets.

The question has been newly fueled by "The Mysterious William Shakespeare," the most detailed presentation of the Oxford case since Looney's own, published in 1984 by Cherton Ogburn, a former State Department official and author. The Stratford-DeVere case has been debated in mock trials before three Supreme Court justices in Washington and three law lords in England. The Stratford man won both, although the Oxfordians consoled themselves that their case can no longer be rejected out of hand.

But as the documentary demonstrates, in academia the debate is neither polite nor civil. The principal Stratfordian witnesses, the American scholar Samuel Schoenbaum and British historian A. L. Rowse, are scornfully dismissive. "Lunatic rubbish" says Schoenbaum; "bloody fools," snorts Rowse of the advocates for Oxford and all other claimants.

Neither attempts to refute the circumstantial evidence supporting the Oxford case. DeVere, one of the premier lords of England and a close friend of Elizabeth, was a poet, some of whose work in his own name survive, a contemporary also called him among "the best we have in comedy" as a playwright, although none of the plays exist - at least under the DeVere signature.

The program produced and directed by Kevin Sim, with Nick Rosen as associate producer, was

made by "Frontline" in conjunction with Yorkshire Television. It works hard to make the debate lively and visual, commencing with footage from the bridge of a Mississippi river boat and a voice-over reciting some of Mark Twain's essay "Is Shakespeare Dead?" Twain caught his love of Shakespeare from a captain who interspersed comments with fragments of poetry in a wonderful stream (or river) of consciousness.

Twain was an early doubter about the Stratford authorship, along with Henry James and Sigmund Freud, and judged that Francis Bacon probably wrote the plays. But Twain was mostly at pains to disprove that the man from Stratford wrote anything but the un-Shakespearean quatrain on his gravestone about leaving his bones alone.

"Frontline" presents relevant snippets from the plays. (Was De Vere giving clues to himself?)

Among the pro-Oxford interviewers are Ogburn himself and young Charles Vere, one of Oxford's collateral descendants who has started an active de Vere Society in England.

Ogburn, frail after illness, speaks movingly of the anguish De Vere must have felt that his life's work might never be recognized as his own because of his need to present it pseudonymously, or behind a front, as in blacklist days.

But the imposture, and the need for it, is the chief weapon the loyal Stratfordites use against all the alternate claimants. The Oxfordian argument is that De Vere as a high courtier and close ally of the queen (although she threw him in the Tower for impregnating one of her ladies-in-waiting) could not be seen to be writing about royal matters.

The history plays justify Elizabeth's own claims to the throne and more generally support the idea of kingship and queenship.

Twain concluded that if the Stratford man "had been less intemperately solicitous about his bones and more solicitous about his Works, it would have been better for his good name and a kindness to us. The bones were not important. They will moulder away, they will turn to dust, but the Works will endure until the last sun goes down."

"There are certain things that defy rational explanation," Schoenbaum says. "There is something incomprehensible about genius. Shakespeare was superhuman."

Anchorman Austin sums it up nicely: "Those who believe De Vere was Shakespeare must accept an improbable hoax as part of it, a conspiracy of silence involving, among others, Queen Elizabeth herself. Those who side with the Stratford man must believe in miracles."

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*"It was the bard of Oxford - not Avon"*

(Philadelphia Inquirer 4/20/89)

by

Warren Hope

The theory that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote the plays and poems traditionally attributed to William Shakespeare, a pen name, has endured the history of most ideas that smack of heresy. At first, the theory was ignored. Then, as it gradually attracted adherents who command respect, such as Sigmund Freud, it was ridiculed. Next, when it became clear that the theory would not go away, it was attacked.

A serious consideration of the theory was on Channel 12's Frontline on Tuesday night. Now it seems likely that the public's level of consciousness on this subject is about to be raised. Serious consideration is what the theory deserves.

Dissatisfaction with the traditional attribution of the plays and poems to William Shakespeare (not Shakespeare) of Stratford-on-Avon grew throughout the second half of the 19th century. Delia Bacon, an American historian, shook that superstition to its roots with a hefty tome that was published at Nathaniel Hawthorne's expense and with a sympathetic foreword by Hawthorne himself.

Since then, doubts have deepened - especially among literary people. Mark Twain comically compared the manufacture of Shakespearean biographies to the reconstruction of dinosaurs by naturalists - a few bits of bone and much plaster of parts. Henry James thought of Will Shakespeare of Stratford as "the most successful fraud ever practiced on a patient world." When P.T. Barnum tried to buy

the great man's birthplace, the cat was all but out of the bag.

While scoffers flourished, no one came forth with a documented reality that could replace the myth. Delie Bacon suggested that the works were composed by a circle of courtier poets, headed by Francis Bacon but also including Sir Walter Raleigh, Edmund Spenser and others. She concentrated on the thought, the philosophy, of the plays and correctly deduced an author, or authors, thoroughly familiar with aristocratic manners and the way of life at court. She did not live to do the biographical research required to fully identify the author.

That task was left to J. Thomas Looney, an English schoolmaster who, in his *Shakespeare Identified* (1920), made a case for Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, as the author. That case has never been seriously challenged, much less disproved.

What's wrong with the traditional attribution of the works to Will Shakspeare? And what is the basis of the case for the Earl of Oxford as the true author?

First, William Shakspeare was the son of illiterate parents. His daughter, Judith, was illiterate, and her sister seems to have been taught to sign her name by her husband. To believe the Stratford theory we must accept the notion that this chain of illiteracy was broken by the greatest outburst of literacy yet to occur in the English language.

Second, we know very little about the life of William Shakspeare - but that little suggests that he was no poet. He is documented as a litigious man who hounded others for petty debts, a speculator in grain and malt who hoarded his holdings in time of famine, and as a man whose strongest ambition seems to have been to buy the biggest house in his home town. No letters by him survive.

The only letter written to him of which we have a record is a request for a loan. When the citizens of Stratford used the force of law to ban the performance of plays in their town, there was not a single play said by Will Shakspeare. When he died, no poet or other writer noted, much less mourned, his passing.

The lives of poets abound with peculiarities, of course - but not a single one of them is distinguished by the grasping, the meanness, and the indifference to literature displayed by the life of Will Shakspeare.

Finally, a number of the plays were originally published anonymously. They were not gathered and issued with an author identified until after Will Shakspeare died in Stratford. He never claimed the authorship of the works himself and there is not a shred of contemporary documentary evidence to connect him with the plays and poems.

The life of the Earl of Oxford presents a very different story.

He was the first courtier poet of merit and originality to emerge during the reign of Elizabeth.

He was hailed by contemporaries for his dramatic writings - one of "the best among us for comedy" - but not a single play by him survives, at least not under his own name.

He sold off his ancestral lands and financed companies of players, writers, poets, musicians, scientists and philosophers.

Shakespearean scholars have identified William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Oxford's father-in-law, as the living prototype of the character Polonius in *Hamlet*.

Contemporary writers refer to Oxford as Wille and Gentle Master William. His boyhood crest, as Viscount Bulbec, displays a lion holding or shaking a broken spear.

As J. Thomas Looney long ago pointed out, these two life stories are pieces of the same puzzle. In the case of Will Shakspeare, we have records describing an unlettered man leading an unlettered life who is nonetheless credited with the greatest works of literature.

In the case of Oxford, we have records describing a literary man leading a literary life who is nonetheless credited with no works of literature that can explain the works of his contemporaries. Let us hope that the Frontline documentary, which came down on the side of Oxford, settled the issue. We can then read and teach the plays and poems in the light of a life that illuminates them, rather than continuing to try and force the works to fit a life that is totally alien to them.

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*"Frontline" makes much ado over Shakespeare*

(Minneapolis Tribune 4/18/89)

by

Noel Holston

Shakespeare by any other name would read as sweet, so why is there so much resistance to the notion that the plays and sonnets attributed to the "Swan of Avon" may have been written by some other Elizabethan?

Would you believe... fear? Fear of losing prestige. Fear of being made to look foolish. Fear of losing money.

"The Shakespeare Mystery," a fascinating and unexpectedly spirited edition of PBS "Frontline" (8 p.m. KTCB-Channel 2), quickly makes clear that Shakespeare means more to Stratford on Avon than Hormel means to Austin. More than a million people visit Stratford each year to see the house where the greatest writer in the English language ostensibly was born and the church where he is entombed. For many scholars and professors he is not only a demigod, he's a livelihood.

Shakespeare's faithful, known as Stratfordians, for more than a century have been pooh-poohing naysayers, among them Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Sigmund Freud. More than 4,000 books and articles about the "authorship question" have been published. But the Stratfordians are particularly defensive these days because of the stepped-up efforts of the Oxfordians, who say the true author of Shakespeare's works was Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

Al Austin of WCCO-Channel 4's I-Team is a doubter, if not an out-and-out Oxfordian. Austin got hooked on the mystery five years ago after reading a sneeringly skeptical treatise by Mark Twain. Austin's "dream project" became a reality when "Frontline" teamed him with producer Kevin Sim ("The Man Who Shot John Lennon") and sent him to England to prepare tonight's program.

The Oxfordian case rests in part on the common-sense theory that Shakespeare, a glovemaking son of apparently limited education, could no more have written "Hamlet," "Macbeth" and "King Lear" than a Russian serf could have penned "War and Peace." They argue that innate intelligence would not have been enough unless the author was intimate with the rich and powerful, and this Edward de Vere was. Born in 1550, de Vere was a brilliant student, a world traveler and, perhaps most important, the ward of Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth I's right-hand man. De Vere was reared in the halls of power.

While he was in his early 20s de Vere wrote poems that are very similar to some poems attributed to Shakespeare. Oxfordians argue that de Vere never stopped writing, but that he was coerced into adopting a pseudonym by Burghley and possibly Elizabeth, lest he embarrass the royal court with plays that were actually satires.

"What not" respond the Stratfordians. And this is where the fun in Austin's "The Shakespeare Mystery" really starts.

British poet A. L. Rowse, one of the world's leading Shakespearean scholars, grows positively apoplectic, so resentful is he of Austin's questions. He does everything but cover his ears and close his eyes. He is the closed mind personified. At one point he declares that de Vere was "a roaring homo" and therefore couldn't possibly have expressed the heterosexual attitudes that permeate the plays and poems. For good measure, Rowse sticks Christopher Marlowe and Francis Bacon with the same tag.

A better witness for the Stratfordians is the foremost Shakespeare scholar in the United States, Samuel Schoenbaum of the Folger Library in Washington. He says the skeptics are merely attempting "to come to terms with the essential incomprehensibility of genius. How could anyone have written these plays?"

But even Schoenbaum is no match in persuasiveness for Charlton Ogburn, an elderly scholar from Beaufort, S.C. who looks rather like Henry Fonda in "On Golden Pond." More than anyone in the documentary, Ogburn answers the question "What does it matter who wrote the stuff?"

To Ogburn, it's a simple matter of justice. "This man who is next to God as a creator, we have taken his work and we've vested it on this miserable, unattractive Stratford man of whom nothing good was ever said except that he was a natural wit."

Ogburn, trail but passionate, quotes passages from "Hamlet" and other works that he believes, for reasons manifest in the words, stem directly from de Vere's anguish at knowing he has created an incomparable body of deeply personal work for which he'll get no credit, not even after his death. There

is the family name to be protected from scandal, after all.

Like the plays, "The Shakespeare Mystery" has low comedy and high drama, it is exquisitely photographed and gracefully edited with appropriate lines from the mysterious playwright's works woven into Austin's reportage. It is likely to make you want to read a sonnet or, better still, see a play performed or rent a videocassette of "Romeo and Juliet" or "Hamlet."

"The Shakespeare Mystery" does have a flaw, a fairly gapping hole. It conspicuously ignores questions about how de Vere might have gotten his illicit writings into the hands of people who could produce and perform them. The Stratford chap may have left behind next to nothing written in his own hand, but his connections to the London theater are among the few documented aspects of his mysterious life.

The oversight doesn't render Austin and Sim's documentary much ado about nothing, however. If anything, it makes the puzzle all the more tantalizing.

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*"Was Shakespeare The Real Thing?"*  
(San Francisco Chronicle 4/18/89)

by  
John Carman

And you thought abortion and gun control were hot issues. Wait until you see English and American gentlemen take off their gloves and slug it out over William Shakespeare.

The Bard of Avon was a fraud and an imposter, according to one faction. He was a simple-minded commoner who could have had no more literary imagination than a duck.

Rot and rubbish, responds one of Shakespeare's most distinguished adherents. People who say such things are "bloody fools" who "aren't qualified to hold an opinion."

Fur flies and reputations are sullied in "The Shakespeare Mystery" (9 tonight on Channel 5, 10 tonight on Channel 9) and "Frontline" installment that crackles with passion and excitement.

The two camps are divided over whether the 37 plays, 154 sonnets and 4 poems attributed to Shakespeare were written by Shakespeare or by Edward de Vere (1550-1604), the 17th Earl of Oxford.

Al Austin, a Minneapolis T.V. reporter who takes on the Shakespeare mystery for "Frontline," lets both sides take their best shots. But, in the end, I had the feeling that Austin tilts toward de Vere. The first half of the show deals with the evidence, or lack of it, that Shakespeare (1564-1616) wrote the works that bear his name.

There are surprises for those of us who know little about the furor. Scholars can find no documentary evidence that Shakespeare ever attended school or ever lived in the Stratford house that tourists flock to as his birthplace. No one knows what he looked like. His will, in which he bequeathed his second best bed to his wife, is silent on the subject of manuscripts.

How, it's wondered, could an actor and son of a glovemaking father have had the intellectual wherewithal to have written the Shakespeare plays, let alone the breadth of experience to have dramatized court intrigues?

Charlton Ogburn, a former State Department official who's become one of the leading de Vere proponents, says of Shakespeare's advocates, "They're like the Christian fundamentalists who believe that life was created, bang, like that overnight ... How could anyone have thought that a man who could barely sign his name was the greatest writer in the English language?"

The second part of the show presents the case for de Vere. It originated 70 years ago, when an English schoolmaster named J. Thomas Looney undertook his own investigation and concluded that de Vere, not Shakespeare, penned the glorious plays and sonnets.

De Vere was a well educated courtier whose propensity for poetry apparently ended suddenly in his youth. He was worldly, athletic, well acquainted with Queen Elizabeth I, a ward of the powerful Lord Burghley (lameponed, perhaps, as Polonius in "Hamlet"?) and quite possibly, a murderer and an adulterer.

The argument is that a nobleman couldn't admit to being a playwright, but that the anguished de Vere left numerous clues as to his identity. For example, might the word "every" in the sonnet phrase "whose

every word doth almost tell my name" be a disguise for the name "de Vere"?

Elizabethan historian A. L. Rowse will have none of this nonsense from "ignorant" people. Rowse calls de Vere "a most frightful lightweight" and, besides, "a roering homo, as (Francis) Bacon was and (Christopher) Merlowa was," a man who couldn't have felt Shakespeare's passion for women.

It is mere snobbery, Rowsa insists, to claim that a commoner such as Shakspeare was incapable of performing literary magic.

So there. But the de Vere faction won't be huffed down by Rowse. Their arguments are intriguing, and "Frontline" serves them up with all the tingle of a vibrant mystery that's survived almost four centuries.

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*"Noble test of Shakespeare"*  
(N.Y. Post 4/18/89)

What a piece of work is "The Shakespeare Mystery," this week's installment of the PBS documentary series "Frontline."

It's noble in reason, but less than noble in the way it goes about its reasoning. That's an observation, not a complaint, because this is one instance in which bias and one-sidedness are relatively harmless and quite entertaining.

"The Shakespeare Mystery" is a co-production by "Frontline" in America and Yorkshire Television in England. The show's joint mission, undertaken by producer-director Kevin Sim and co-producer Al Austin, is to prove that Will Shakspeare didn't write the plays and poems credited to him and then to identify who did and what his or her motives were for denying authorship of some of the greatest literature in history.

Separating Will Shakspeare, the man from Stratford, from the canon credited to him is the easy part. That debate has ranged for more than 100 years, and this "Frontline" even quotes liberally from Mark Twain, who wrote an essay facetiously titled "Is Shakespeare Dead?"

Twain, reiterating the common argument at the time, tried to prove that the plays credited to Will Shakspeare demonstrated such an insider's knowledge of the workings and jargon of law, the royal court, falconry and other high-bred activities that no poorly educated peasant could have written them.

The documentary, however, doesn't quote the best passages from Twain's argument, claims other observations as its own, and underplays the fact that Twain, while skeptical of Shakespeare, was just as emphatically convinced that the "real" author was Francis Bacon. The logic of that once common opinion is much less persuasive; Twain should have stuck to his original impression regarding the controversy, which he wrote as: "I only BELIEVED Bacon wrote Shakespeare, whereas I KNEW Shakeapeare didn't."

The evidence against Shakspeare or, more specifically, the lack of evidence for him, remains strong, even though the very idea of Shakspeare being a straw man, like Woody Allen's character in "The Front," strikes many as literary heresy.

Opinion runs so strong that one of Shakspeare's defenders, historian A. L. Rowse, all but foams at the mouth while dismissing opposition arguments as "lunatic rubbish" and "rot," and ridiculing other scholars. Meanwhile, on the other side, an author convinced that the man who wrote those brilliant plays and poems was unable to claim them is so shaken by that contention that he chokes up and cries.

(The show is clearly weighted, though, in favor of the anti-Stratfordian scholars, who come off as thoughtful as opposed to rabid.)

So whom does this documentary single out as the probable author of Shakspeare's plays? Edward de Vere, but to reveal more than his name would go to the heart of "The Shakespeare Mystery."

This documentary is exciting because it takes Shakespeare and his prose and poetry out of those circles and brings them vividly to life.

David Bianculli

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***"Shakespeare mystery persists"***

(The Boston Globe 4/18/89)

by

Kevin Kelly

"Who's buried in Grant's tomb?" is the usual reply to "Who wrote Shakespeare?" But the real difference is that the second question persists. It has, in fact, persisted since 1920 when an English schoolmaster, J. Thomas Looney, published "Shakespeare Identified," which set out to prove that the illiterate glover's son from Stratford-on-Avon could not possibly have written the 154 sonnets, 37 plays and four poems so generously attributed to him since the 17th century. Upset by the inconsistencies he discovered in his research, Looney boldly stated that groveling William Shakespeare was none other than Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

The Stratfordian guardians of English lit have been laughing themselves *looney* ever since.

Being staunchly in the deVere camp, it would give me great pleasure to say the Stratfordians may not be laughing quite so hard after "The Shakespeare Mystery" on "Frontline" tonight at 9 on Channel 2. But that's not the case. While the program seems to me unquestionably pro-Oxford, it echoes with such false "Shakespearean" drama that most of it is like smoke swirling from Vincent Price's hearth during an unusually thick series on "Mystery." It makes several important points - the lack of documents relating to Will Shakespeare's birth; the six different spellings of the six supposed signatures of the name itself; the lack of evidence of higher education; the discrepancies in his will - but almost never follows through.

When, for example, the breadth of knowledge displayed in the plays is mentioned, the camera pans a typically raftered English schoolroom where pink little boys are learning their Latin and Greek. We're led to imagine Little Will among them. The fact is, as Charlton Ogburn reported in his remarkable 1984 book, "The Mysterious William Shakespeare," there exist no records of the Stratford Grammar School (let alone a record of Little Will having attended the school.) Even if enrollment and education were as stringent as the Stratfordians (airily) surmise, how could the son of illiterate parents have passed the entrance exams?

This question - and many even more provocative, if not conclusive - is handled lightly. Ogburn is present to answer. Most of the time he answers perceptively (twice, however, unfortunately breaking into tears; he has fought a long fight). But Will's education is sidelined by Stratfordian Samuel Schoenbaum, who tells us, in a lispig sigh, about the "incomprehensibility of genius" as though that, indeed, is all we need to know. Even more pompous (and right out of Oscar Wilde) is the preposterous A. L. Rowse, the Shakespearean scholar so swollen with his own erudition that he discredits all Oxfordians as "bloody fools who aren't qualified to hold an opinion." Perhaps, more than anything else, Rowse's contempt is evidence of his own weak argument. (Methinks he doth protest too much.) Rowse has built a career on Shakespeare of Stratford. Any admission that William is not who Rowse says he is, is blasphemy. (Rowse is particularly hilarious trying to prove Will wasn't "a homo, you know, like Christopher Meriowe and Francis Bacon.")

Anyway, there is far more to the Shakespeare question than "Frontline's" hovering approach has it, an approach somehow making much of both sides of the argument. The recitation of intelligent men who have doubted the Stratford identity is impressive - Emerson, Twain, Freud, Whitman, Galsworthy, Disraeli, Charles Chaplin - but far more than that is needed now. "Frontline" has paraphrased a tantalizing literary mystery only to surround it with moonlight, theatrical fog and misty poetry. What's missing is the courtroom sizzle of Charlton Ogburn's book.

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***"Shakespeare Mystery" unfolds"***

(The Washington Square News)

by

Gary Goldstein

From the middle of the 19th century, the identity of the men who wrote the Shakespeare plays has been an issue of contention, because, as Ralph Waldo Emerson said, people "cannot marry the man to

the works."

Of the 37 plays in the Shakespeare canon, 36 are laid in royal courts and the world of the nobility, or otherwise in the highest circles of society. The principal characters are almost all aristocrats, as are their vocabulary, manners, pastimes and politics. No other dramatist before or since has drawn his casts so predominantly from the nobility, or been such a literary habitué of English courts.

Yet Shakespeare the Stratfordian, according to such information as we have of him, was in his background, character, education, opportunities and reputation while alive and in the world he would have known, very nearly the antithesis of the kind of man we judge Shakespeare to have been on the testimony of his works.

There is no evidence that Shakespeare the Stratfordian ever had a day's schooling or wrote anything but six signatures of unpracticed penmanship. His parents, wife and children were illiterate except that one of his daughters could, like her father, write her name.

There is no evidence that he claimed to have written any of the plays and sonnets later attributed to him, or had any part in their publication, and, although he died when 20 of the plays remained unpublished, he made no mention of them in his will and showed no interest in their survival. He is not known to have owned a book. His obscurity was such that in 1596, at the height of his supposed fame, not even the tax collectors in London could discover where he lived.

Orthodox Shakespeare scholars contend that the work of a literary genius need bear no relationship to his background, experience, or demonstrated character and may in fact be dramatically opposed to them. They uphold Shakespeare of Stratford as a model of unpremeditated art ("warbling his native woodnotes wild," Milton said) - inspiration incarnate.

Nevertheless, as a result of Shakespeare's questionable literary and biographical credentials, numerous counter-claimants for the authorship laurels have been proposed over the years. The most enduring have included Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Devereux (Earl of Essex), and even Queen Elizabeth.

In 1920, however, a claim was put forward on behalf of a man who is now, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, "the strongest candidate (next to Shakespeare himself) for the authorship of Shakespeare's plays." In that year, an English schoolteacher named J. Thomas Looney published *Shakespeare Identified* which documented the case for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford as the authentic author of the works of "William Shakespeare."

John Galsworthy declared it the best detective story he had ever read, and handed out copies to his friends. Most, however, assumed the position of Winston Churchill. When offered a copy of Looney's book, he turned it down with the remark: "I don't like to have my myths tampered with."

On Tuesday evening Channel 13 will broadcast a documentary entitled *The Shakespeare Mystery*, which will explore de Vere's claim to the Shakespeare throne. NYU English professor Richard Harrier said of the controversy, "there's no basis for the argument; the evidence is nonsense. Consequently, the documentary is all a waste of time, unless you look at it as film art."

But many disagree. Appearing on the Frontline program at 9 p.m. *The Shakespeare Mystery* might disturb a myth now 400 years old. At the least, it will prove an introduction to that contentious debate: the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

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### *"The uranium of the Shakespeare canon is simply the use of words"*

In his column in *The Washington Post* (4/21/89) Henry Mitchell attempts to ridicule and discredit the anti-Stratfordians, although conceding that the "passion with which the Oxford partisans argue their case is impressive..." His comprehension and appreciation of the genius of "William Shakespeare" is tellingly revealed by the last three paragraphs of his column:

The uranium of the Shakespeare canon is simply the use of words. Many of his most beautiful are those of a 10-year-old. His vocabulary was fabulously large, but the number of words does not explain how to line them up and have them all catch fire.

We have his example, his very words. Surely we can master the trick as well as he? And yet the stock of masterpieces is for some reason limited. The truth is that the gods rained down on him quite undeserved gifts and not on us. There he was doing God knows what at farmhouses with nubile daughters, and carousing about sweaty theaters backstage. A poor example to us all.

And I sympathize with the deVere partisans. It's too much to take, that every gift a writer ever dreamed of was dumped on some kid from the middle of nowhere, dodging cowpats to pick a bunch of blasted primroses. It's life, good friend, and it stinks.

When a prominent Stratfordian disseminates such a limited and demeaning perception to the readers of The Washington Post, we can only hope that the most discerning of them will someday be disabused and enlightened by the spacious and reverential perception of Ralph Waldo Emerson:

What point of morals, of manners, of economy, of religion, of taste, of the conduct of life, has (Shakespeare) not settled? What mystery has he not signified his knowledge of? What office or function, or district of man's work has he not remembered? What king has he not taught state, as Talma taught Napoleon? What maiden has not found him tiner than her delicacy? What lover has he not outloved? What sage has he not outseen? What gentlemen has he not instructed in the rudeness of his behavior?

Morse Johnson

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### THE SHAKESPEARE MYSTERY

by

Lydia Bronte, Ph.D.

On June 6, Yorkshire TV will air a documentary (The Shakespeare Mystery) on a highly unusual question: Who was the man who wrote Shakespeare's plays?

Will Shakspeare's career is one of the great populist myths of our culture, a splendid Renaissance version of television soap-opera drama: a young man from a little English farming town goes to the big city to seek his fortune, hobnobs with royalty, and becomes the greatest playwright our language has produced.

The core of the myth is a message dear to the hearts of a democracy. If Will Shakspeare can do it, all of us can do it. We can each become, in our own way, more than anyone expects, more than we dream of being.

Yet behind that heart-warming fantasy lies no historically verifiable evidence that Will Shakspeare of Stratford was the true author of the plays. There are no manuscripts in "Shakespeare's" hand; no 16th century records naming the man from Stratford as a brilliant author; no youthful poetry from Will Shakspeare's pen. We have, all in all, the record of his baptism April 26, 1564; six blotchy, unpracticed signatures, each spelling his name differently; the notation of his marriage to Anne Hathaway, and a record of lawsuits, purchases of property, taxes, mortgages, family births and deaths.

Writers and intellectuals have repeatedly questioned how such a great author could have produced such a monumental work so young and left so few concrete traces behind him.

Coming from a family which in the middle of the last century produced two well-known writers, my own perplexity about "William Shakespeare" has always revolved about a different incongruity; how is it that the substance of the plays reflects so little of "Will Shakspeare's" life?

Writers till the soil of their own experience for their richest harvest. While imagination is very important, fiction and drama always have deep roots in the author's own life. Charlotte and Emily Bronte freely used the substance of their lives in their fiction: their childhood on the Yorkshire moors, the odd characters they encountered in and around Haworth, family legends (it was from one of these that the plot of Wuthering Heights was spun), experiences from schools they and their sisters attended and from

their adult years of work as governesses. Their novels "match" their life histories; Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights are completely intelligible as artistic products created from those lives in that time and place.

But the Shakespeare plays do not "match" the life of Will Shakspeare of Stratford. The author of the plays was totally preoccupied with the lives of the aristocracy. He is concerned above all with affairs of great pith and moment: the destiny of the State, the justice of kings, the true successor to the throne, honor and duty. His endless fascination is demonstrated by the fact that of his 37 plays, 36 of them are set in royal courts or in circles of the nobility.

There is no trace of the immersion in small-town, country life which we might expect to find. The Will Shakspeare who diligently sued a local apothecary for mail he received but did not pay for and who left his second-best bed to his wife - his last will and testament does not mention any books at all - is oddly absent from the plays. Only if we note the characters of lesser rank do we find resemblances to the Stratford businessman; but many of these are comical or even grotesque, not characters with whom the author identifies deeply. We must ask ourselves: if the middle-class son of Stratford was really the author, how did he come by this total absorption in aristocratic life - and how did he ever learn enough about it to write believably about it?

One obvious answer was that the true author of the plays was someone else - a person whose identity was concealed through some necessity of fate or station.

There is indeed another, more plausible candidate: Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Born April 22, 1550, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth, de Vere was raised at court, esteemed as a poet in his youth, and inherited a troupe of actors from his father at the age of 12, which he maintained for most of the rest of his life. One of his family estates was on the Avon river. His life reads like a series of episodes from the Shakespeare plays: the model for Polonius was his father-in-law, William Cecil, Lord Burghley; his troubled marriage to Anne Cecil could serve as a pattern for Hamlet's relationship with Ophelia. He travelled in the North of Italy, where so many of Shakespeare's plays are set. There are hundreds of correspondences between Oxford's life and the substance of the plays.

But if Oxford was the author, why was this fact concealed? The answer lies in the byzantine nature of the Elizabethan court and in the mores of the age. Oxford was the premier noble of the realm, the Lord Great Chamberlain. For his plays to be performed in public theaters and attributed to him would have been a scandal of monumental proportions - both because the theater was outside the pale of polite society, and because the plays often hit far too close to the nerves of very important people. Attributed to a commoner, they seemed both less offensive and less seditious.

Understandably, Shakespeare scholars find the prospect upsetting. Whoever contrived the ruse has fooled us all for centuries, scholars and public alike - not something we like to acknowledge. And if Oxford were accepted as Shakespeare, lifetimes of devoted scholarship would be changed in the twinkling of an eye.

But the truth, as Shakespeare himself said, will out. If the real author is the Earl of Oxford, it is worth knowing, and worth all the revision which would be required. Understanding the man behind the works will add a far greater richness and depth to the plays and to Shakespearean scholarship of the future, than we have ever dreamed of in our previous studies.

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### GENIUS!

Samuel Schoenbaum in the "Frontline" production (1989):

There are certain things that defy rational explanation. There is something incomprehensible about genius. Shakespeare was superhuman.

G. G. Greenwood in The Shakespeare Problem Restated (1908):

Now, putting aside for the moment the other plays above-mentioned, and fixing our attention only on Love's Labour's Lost and the Venus and Adonis . . . , how is it possible to conceive that those works,

which proclaim in every line that their author was a cultured and courtly aristocrat, were composed by William Shakspeare of Stratford?

I know, of course, what the answer of the Stratfordian will be. He will ingeminate "Genius! Genius!" Has not Sir Theodore Martin written that the difficulty has arisen with "certain people to whom the ways of genius are a stumbling-block?" Of Sir Theodore Martin I can only write in terms of unfeigned respect, and I regret that he should have entertained such contempt for those who would examine the claims of genius rather strictly ... It is as if he had written, "Those poor people, - those poor dolts, - they cannot understand the ways of genius. 'But we are Spirits of another sort!'" Well, if by "Genius" is meant the Genius of the Arabian Nights who can bring into being an Aladdin's Palace by a mere word, then no doubt Genius can do all that those complacent critics claim for it. But if human genius be intended, then I venture to think that they have greatly misconceived the functions and potentialities of genius, and that for all their fancied superiority, they will happily be found to be but wise in their own conceits. Genius may give the power of acquiring knowledge, but genius is not knowledge. Genius never taught a man to conjugate (a Greek verb) who had never had a lesson in Greek nor seen a Greek grammar. Many a "mute inglorious Milton" rests in many a country churchyard. And why? Because

Knowledge to their eyes her ample page

Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll.

... Take for example, Shakespeare's extraordinary knowledge of law ... As Mr. Castle, K.C., truly says, "Law is a comparatively dry subject, only to be acquired by a large amount of experience and trouble; there is no intuitive knowledge of the forms of pleading and the use of technical words and phrases, and therefore if these are to be found in some of the plays, we have a knowledge that must have been acquired." Ardent Shakespearologists, however, seem to think that Shakspeare might have acquired an accurate knowledge of the doctrine of Uses (e.g.) by the mere force of genius. They would, in his case at all events, doubtless subscribe to Dogberry's dictum that "to write and read comes by nature!"

And though genius may prompt one to sing sweetly without much knowledge, it would require not genius but divine inspiration to enable a young provincial apprentice, who had passed through a call-boy to play-actor, and who had picked up a few crumbs of education at the Stratford Free School (where by the way he had, it would seem, given no indications of genius whatsoever) - in a word, Shakspeare as we know him to have been - not only to wake to ecstasy the living lyre but to write of all things under heaven as never man wrote before or since. "All the commentators on Shakespeare," writes Mr. Ellacombe, "are agreed that he was the most wonderfully many-sided writer that the world has yet seen. Every art and science are more or less noticed by him so far as they were known in his day, every business and profession are more or less accurately described, and so it has come to pass that, though the main circumstances of his life are pretty well known, yet the students of every art and science, and the members of every business and profession, have delighted to claim him as their fellow-labourer ..."

But genius alone cannot do all this. Genius is a gift of nature, but nature alone never gave knowledge and culture. The diamond is a natural product, but, however fine its quality, it will not sparkle like the Koh-i-nur unless it be subjected to the process of cutting at the hands of a skillful artificer. No; the genius of Shakespeare was genius in conjunction with wide reading, and the best culture that the age could provide.

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*"This year, my current students have reveled in tales of Shaksper and of de Vere."*

April 8, 1989

Dear Mr. Ogburn:

Last year as I taught my Shakespeare unit, complete with traditional biographical data, I mentioned the contested authorship. Immediately, my Advanced Placement seniors seized upon that "off the cuff" statement, eager to learn more. However, I was at a loss since, at the time, I could neither accurately refer to myself as a Stratfordian nor as an Oxfordian, having never questioned the time-honored view nor

read any opposing view. Nevertheless, I promised to do a little research and return to class with more information.

When a colleague in the English Department referred me to *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, I began what I thought would be an hour's study. Five hours later, I was mesmerized and eager to return to class with my preliminary findings. That information so galvanized my students that the class period is indelibly etched in my memory. As a result, my summer project became firmly established: I purchased my personal copy; and the adventure, which ultimately birthed another Oxfordian, began. This year, my current students have revelled in tales of Shaksper and of de Vere.

I found your chapter "A Very Ancient and Fish-Like Smell" particularly appropriate as an introduction for the students. Therefore, using a poster-size print of the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio I led the class through a critical look at the aspects which suggest a hoax. It was not until class was dismissed that I made my own critical discovery.

As I studied the subject's features, I became aware of another enigmatic aspect: several day's growth of facial hair which was most obvious in the enlargement. If, indeed, those responsible for the *First Folio* commissioned the engraving to immortalize the author, why then did they present such an unkempt man to the world? Men have traditionally sought to maintain full beards and/or well manicured mustaches or to be clean shaven; yet the "Soul of the Age," the "Star of Poets" is remembered as one with perpetual whiskers. Since the work was executed seven years after the playwright's death, surely Droeshout had some motive in not allowing the object of our respect to be clean shaven or groomed in the style of the day. I can only conclude that the ill-groomed subject of the portrait provides another subtle clue to unraveling the hoax.

Thank you for sharing your research so eloquently; it allowed me to participate in those discoveries and encouraged me to examine critically the body of information which I had once accepted so unquestioningly.

Sincerely,

Alice W. Wright, Chairperson  
English Department  
Dr. Phillips High School  
Orlando, Florida

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*"...NONE of them give the age old intro to Shakespeare that so many young people have been exposed to."*

by  
Dom Sallent

Two years ago, a copy of Ogburn crossed my path and Shakespeare has not been the same since. I am a high school English teacher and for the last 13 years Shakespeare has always been my favourite unit of study at all the levels I teach. Students have told me that because of my enthusiasm, they have come to regard the Bard as being OK. Now that is an accomplishment. As I just mentioned, I have only been an Oxfordian for the last two years and my interest in Shakespeare has turned into what some would call an obsession. I would not agree.

If I may, I would like to share with you some of my experiences in the classroom concerning De Vere. I started using the information on De Vere to introduce my Shakespeare units almost immediately upon reading Ogburn. Word got out among the students that the canon had been challenged and my colleagues began questioning me on the matter. I have a running debate going on with two of my colleagues who are classic Stratfordians to the nth degree. I have had too many humorous moments to mention in this regard.

One notable development is that I have been asked to do "guest spots" in other teachers' classes on De Vere. To date I have done about 15 of these sessions and what that translates to is that about 450 students have been exposed to the Oxford contention. Needless to say, most are convinced that there is

great doubt that the Stratford man wrote the plays and I would say that the majority of the students are convinced that De Vere should be credited. There are 10 teachers in my department and I am proud to say that NONE of them give the age old intro to Shakespeare that so many young people have been exposed to. You know what I mean - the lecture about the few facts that we have about the Stratford man and the many films that romanticize those few facts to create a literary hero that is mythic in proportion.

Just last month, I spent 3 hours doing a session with my Department Head's class and she is now convinced that the matter should be investigated. This is a major victory as you can well imagine. (She fought the idea of even considering the issue for a long time because she has a sympathetic attachment to the man from Stratford - she shares the same birthday with him.) She has agreed to subscribe to the S.O.S. Newsletter and the Spear-Shaker on behalf of the department. She is even reading Ogburn!

The Oxford movement even got coverage in our school newspaper in an article entitled "De Vere or not De Vere." In last year's yearbook, they included a picture of me wearing a De Vere sweatshirt. The sweatshirt sports a picture of De Vere and a caption below which reads:

"De Vere	37
Shaksperc	0

I have heard from the editor of the yearbook, who just happens to be an Oxfordian also, that in this year's yearbook, they will be dedicating a WHOLE page to the presentations that I am making and the ongoing debate at our school on the issue. My Stratfordian colleagues will not be impressed.

Henry Wise Wood High School in Calgary will never be the same!

In early February, I was invited to the University to speak for two hours on the authorship question to students in their final year at Teacher training. Here's how it came about. We have student teachers train in our schools and two who were with us just before Christmas found themselves in the middle of an authorship discussion in one of their Curriculum Instruction classes. They suggested to their professor that they knew someone who would be willing to talk on the matter and so the invitation was extended to me to speak. Of course, I accepted.

How did it go you ask. Well, if you insist, I'll tell you. It started out inauspiciously. I hadn't said more than three sentences when the first hand shot up to challenge one of my points. I dealt with it satisfactorily and then continued for another minute before another challenge ensued. Interestingly enough, however, she answered her own question (better than I could have) and then let me continue. And that was it. From that point on, it was great. They were very receptive and extremely cooperative. I would ask a question and they would compete to answer, if you can believe it.

I spoke for two hours without a break and they told me afterwards that they could have sat through another two hours but we had to vacate the room because another class was scheduled for the room. I have been invited back to deal with some of the classroom implications of the authorship question and have agreed to return. I can hardly wait. What is really neat is that these people actually have the literary background to appreciate the finer points in the argument.

This is just the beginning. Just recently, because of my spreading reputation among my colleagues, I have been invited to give a session at the next Language Arts Conference in May. This is attended by hundreds of English teachers from all over the province. This year's conference theme, ironically enough, is "Clearing the Way." Now what could be more appropriate? The gist of my talk is that for the "way to be clearer" for fruitful Shakespearean teaching/appreciation/interpretation, the authorship question must be asked.

They will be giving me three hours for my talk. They expect close to two hundred teachers will attend my session. A great deal of interest has already been aroused and the booklet describing the sessions has not even been distributed yet.

I am a little apprehensive about doing this session. As you know, people in academic circles are not that open to having their long held faiths challenged. I may be setting myself up for another "Daniel in the lions' den" story. (I wonder if De Vere has any connection upstairs to help me out, if need be.)

A number of things struck me about the annual meeting of the members of S.O.S. in Richmond. Firstly, the movement is in need of more young blood/minds for it to continue. Second, there didn't seem to be any awareness or concern about what is being presented in classrooms to the students of Shakespeare. I really believe that this should be a concern. For this movement to succeed, we have to get to the young people and the only way to get to these young people is through their teachers.



I would recommend that some sort of information package be prepared that objectively lays the cards on the table concerning the authorship question. This information package should be made available to classroom teachers and believe me, it would be more than welcome. Teachers are just dying to get information that will bring life to their Shakespeare units. If we can send the message out to thousands of students, the time will come when the authorship question will have to be resolved one way or the other.

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**A LETTER TO THE EARL OF OXFORD  
EDWARD DeVERE\***

REST, REST, PERTURBED SPIRIT  
Trust time! The truth will out!  
Stratford cannot contain your monument  
for it is everywhere that Romeo sighs,  
Leer howls or Portia pleads her case  
and Hamlet rouses us to rage at the  
injustice of the world!

We hear our inmost thoughts and know  
ourselves a little better than we did  
because you live immortally in every line  
A simple schoolmaster stood up to Stratford,  
searched you out because he understood  
what writers always knew  
"The work could not be merried to the man."

A band of lawyers then took up your cause  
and spoke in your defense.  
Our scholars sacrifice their lives'  
best energies to clear your wounded name,  
gallantly battle ignorance and arrogance,  
endure the SCORN WHICH PATIENT MERIT  
OF THE UNWORTHY ALWAYS TAKES

And bless the actor, he of that motley crew  
you loved so well.  
Dreery rehearsal halls and empty dressing rooms  
are his reward for the pure joy of  
giving your verse a voice.  
Four centuries he's brought you  
to the common men  
who might not find you in a book.

Speer-shaker, Patron Saint of Poets - No!  
Stratford cannot contain your monument  
for it is in the heart of every reader  
REST, REST, PERTURBED SPIRIT!  
Trust time! The truth will out!  
THE END CROWNS ALL!

Katharine Assante  
Cornwall, New York

\* Read by the distinguished poetess and English teacher Katharine Assante at the dinner in Cambridge, Massachusetts on query April 14, 1989 (see p. 22), at which time she dedicated it to Charlton Ogburn, Ruth Lloyd Miller and William Plumer Fowler.

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**"Shakespeare's 'Outstanding' Medical Knowledge"**  
(The Washington Post 3/6/89)  
by  
Aurora Mackey

No evidence is visible amid the brain charts, medical journals and multiple diplomas scattered throughout the office of neurologist Lance Fogan that would suggest there might be anything odd about some of his patients, or even a bit unusual about some of his methods of diagnosis.

Nor should there be, since the silver-haired physician thinks it not at all strange that, along with his more ordinary patients, he also diagnoses the dementias, deliriums and diseases of 400-year-old epileptic princes, hallucinating lords, paralyzed dukes and mad kings.

King Richard III, a particularly murderous, malformed monarch, for example, clearly suffered from "a limp, possibly representative of a hemiparetic or spastic paraparetic gait, which in turn could be

secondary to a spinal-cord lesion associated with a kyphoscoliosis."

Absently repping the tip of his pen on the desk of his Kaiser-Permanente office in Panorama City, Fogan jovially conceded that the patient charts for this elite, centuries-old group may not be quite appropriate in the metal file cabinet outside his door. But that, he quickly added, is only because they already are bound together quite nicely in a large volume he keeps at home.

It's called "The Complete Works of Shakespeare."

"Shakespeare's medical knowledge was astounding. Centuries later," Fogan said, tightly clutching a pen in his hand, "his description of characters is so accurate that physicians can diagnose them."

It is a recent award from the American Academy of Neurology in any indication, the medical community appears to share that belief. A 31-page medical examination of the Bard's characters, written and researched by Fogan, won the association's prestigious Lawrence C. McHenry award for the best research paper in 1988.

Titled "The Neurology of Shakespeare," Fogan's paper extracted research from 31 of the Bard's 37 plays. It traced everything from descriptions of epilepsy, physiologically induced psychosis, dementia and alcohol's effects on the nervous system, to vertigo, tremors, spinal deformities, incontinence, impotence and end-stage syphilis.

"I thought it would be fascinating, but also fun," said Fogan, who got his introduction to the Bard several years ago while taking an adult education class "in an attempt to get educated." After carefully studying Shakespeare's plays, Fogan said, he learned that other physicians had looked at characters from their own specialty's point of view, "but there wasn't a lot of the neurological implications."

Fogan, in fact, is in good company when it comes to the number of physicians fascinated by Shakespearean characters. From the pages of 19th century medical writings up to recent articles published in the New England Journal of Medicine, the Bard's knowledge of medicine has been analyzed by everyone from pediatricians and psychiatrists to dentists and ear, nose and throat specialists.

One 1983 letter, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, for instance, asked the probing question, "Did Falstaff have the Sleep-Apnea Syndrome?" A 1983 article published in the Medical Journal of Australia examined Shakespeare's knowledge of syphilis, while another article, published in the Journal of American Medical Association, explored the Bard's knowledge of chest diseases. Physicians even explored Shakespeare's understanding of pregnancy and childbirth in an article published in the medical journal OB GYN, called "Was the Bard an Obstetrician?"

To Shakespearean scholars, such intense scrutiny from the medical community is nothing new.

"People are always claiming Shakespeare for their profession," said Norman Rabkin, a retired Shakespeare professor at the University of California, Berkeley, whose books have included "Shakespeare and the Common Understanding" and "Shakespeare and Meaning."

"Lawyers," Rabkin said, "are doing it all the time, saying he must have been a lawyer (because of his legal knowledge). But I've never encountered any of this medical business," Rabkin said.

What fascinates physicians like Fogan, however, is the wide range of diseases described by Shakespeare and his knowledge of them in the context of his time. In his research paper, Fogan, also an assistant clinical professor of neurology at UCLA, examined scene after scene to support a particular character's diagnosis.

In "Othello," for example, Fogan points out that the Moorish prince has a seizure on stage, at which point the despicable Iago warns those around him not to touch him. That advice, Fogan said, is given by physicians to relatives of some epileptics today.

"Physicians couldn't have known then that there were different kinds of seizures, and one we now call 'partial complex.' Right before such seizure, the person will suddenly look frightened," Fogan said. "Before Othello's seizures, his face is described as having the same expression."

In a jealous fit later in the play, Othello strangles his beloved wife, Desdemona, with rolling eyes and a similar expression on his face. "Defense lawyers today would probably get him off for that," Fogan said, smiling. "He was having a seizure and didn't know what he was doing."

Shakespeare also made known his awareness of neuroanatomy, Fogan said, through his references to the "pia mater." In Elizabethan England, pia mater referred not only to the membrane covering the skull but also the brain itself. In "Love's Labor's Lost," for example, a reference to the origin of memory is found in the line, "These are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of the pia mater ..." Even 400 years later, Fogan said, "It's difficult to be more precise in locating memory."

In tracing various neurologically related ailments, Fogan found descriptions of numerous conditions, from headaches to a damaged sense of smell - which, if a line uttered in "King Lear" is correct, could have been suffered by as much as 5 percent of Tudor England. "All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men, and there's not a nose among 20 but can smell him that's stinking."

"It it's accurate," Fogan said, "head injuries, upper-respiratory and sinus infections were the likely causes (of damaged senses of smell)"

"The Neurology of Shakespeare" provides a long list of other ailments common to modern physicians and neurologists that also afflicted Shakespeare's characters: "The Tempest's" Prospero, who suffered with leg cramps and leg spasms; the nurse in "Romeo and Juliet," whose head "beats as it would fell in twenty pieces"; Hermia, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," whose double vision was voiced by "Me thinks I see these things with parted eye"; the widow's vertigo in "Taming of the Shrew," described by "He that is giddy thinks the world turns round"; and York, an old man in "Richard II," calling himself a "prisoner to the palsy" of the paralysis in one arm.

One of the most impressive pieces of medical information Shakespeare apparently had, according to Fogan, can be found in "Hamlet." In the play, Hamlet's father is poisoned in the garden and later returns to his son as a ghost, revealing that Hamlet's uncle poured henbane (a toxic herb) in his ear as he lay sleeping. Like many others, Fogan said he initially dismissed the method of poisoning as dramatic, rather than medically accurate.

In 1986, however, a New England Journal of Medicine article reported that during the Renaissance, many people had ruptured ear drums, the result of infections that ran their course in the 300 years prior to penicillin's invention. With a permanent hole in the ear drum, Fogan said, "If someone poured worm poison into the ear, it would go into the eustachian tube, into the throat and into the stomach. How did Shakespeare know about that, though?"

Indeed, how Shakespeare came about his wide range of medical knowledge has been a subject of speculation for years. Medical literature of Shakespeare's time may have afforded the Bard some of his information - although physicians today stress the limitations of whatever medical knowledge was available.

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*"... one is at a loss to know how it is possible for academe to keep up the charade."*

March 8, 1989

Dear Mr. Ogburn:

This is just a line to thank you very much for your superb and compelling book, *The Mystery of William Shakespeare*, which has recently been published here.

Your case against the man from Stratford is so total that one is at a loss to know how it is possible for academe to keep up the charade. One can understand that at any one time the old generation has a vested interest in preserving the status quo. But why do new generations of academics continue to invest in the self-evident, now-you-point-it-out, bankrupt Stratford Charade Company??

One always thinks of knowledge progressing from thesis to anti-thesis to synthesis. In the case of Shakespeare this principle seems to have been held in suspension for a mighty long time. Waiting perhaps for your antithesis. Yet for what should be a major news story, it is remarkable how slow the media here seem to be in catching on to one of the stories of the century. This amounts to the ultimate "who dunnit", which one would have thought would have been serialized with appropriate sensational headlines in all the "quality" papers.

In any other area of study one would expect the new generation of students to be rebelling against their teachers and taking up the case with iconoclastic zeal.

One point which may have already been brought to your attention. On p. 306 of the UK edition, in your valuable and telling section on the relationship between an author and his work, you state that you can find nothing on this subject earlier than Chateaubriand. You may like to have this quote from Ben

Jonson himself in Discoveries:

"Language most shews a man: speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and innermost parts of us, and is the image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glass renders a man's forme, or likeness, so true as his speech."

I do not think there can be any doubt that "language" and "speech" here include the written word quite as much as the spoken. It too must, by the same law of expression, be equally an "Image of ... the mind."

For scholars to suggest that Shakespeare was somehow an exception to this principle is utterly absurd and contrary to all common sense and experience. Any writer, indeed any creative person who has found his true voice, cannot do anything but speak his mind. The greater and more powerful an individual the more certain one can be that his words are an expression of his Soul and not some synthetic echo or cardboard replica of current fashion. But, even for the most shadowy of beings, everything we do and say, and in which we take an interest, must inevitably be a reflection of the kind of person we are. What else could it reflect?

One only has to look at the character of some of the outstanding psychologists of this century, such as Freud, Jung, Assagioli, Skinner, et al. to see that even in a supposedly "objective" science, that these psychologists have projected their own dispositions on to the world, and proceeded to model the world in their own likeness. Could it be otherwise?

A second small point which has no doubt been suggested by many others before. On pp. 173-174 of the UK edition you quote Ben Jonson referring to the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio:

O, could he but have drawn his wit  
As well as brass, as he hath hit  
His face; . . . . .

I read "hit" spontaneously as "hid". That would be a very typical pun of the period. It would be interesting to see whether one could find any other use of hit/hid as a pun at this time.

So on to your second part and the Earl of Oxford. As far as I am concerned you have made an equally compelling case for Oxford as you have against Stratford. Most convincing I feel is that fact that once you insert Oxford into the equation so many facts drop into place, and so many questions one had never thought to ask before are suddenly answered. Indeed one feels confident that if as much effort had by now been put into looking in the right place as in the wrong, the case would be closed and the Stratford-on-Avon myth would only be known about by hearsay as one of the aberrations of history.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of all of your book is that it has sent me, and no doubt countless other readers, back to the Shakespeare plays with a new zest and understanding.

All Power to you,

Charles Harvey  
Somerset, England

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*"It is more important to lose all but the last battle than to win all but the last."*

22 January 1988

Dear Charlton:

I think the outcome of the trial before the moot court was to be expected, and that the triumph of the cause can only come by way of such successive defeats. The fact that *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* has been published in England — and favorably reviewed in *The Guardian* — shows that the thesis will continue to rise, stronger than ever, after every killing. It is more important to lose all but the last battle than to win all but the last.

I know something of the academic world, having had a long career on the inside as an outsider — first as a graduate student in anthropology at Harvard, then as a professor of politics in Geneva. The

objective of the members of any academic community is to learn to say *what we all say in the language in which we all say it*. (Surely it was the same in the priesthood, and in the preparation for the priesthood, in the Middle Ages.) I have known students who, in their Ph.D. theses, would say what they knew to be factually false because the saying of it would identify them with the community in which they intended to make their careers. Such behavior, in my experience, is more the rule than the exception. In fact, it would be hard to find any exception in the academic communities I have known. You can be unorthodox because you are an outsider — as I have always been an outsider.

In the progress of human knowledge, however, a time does come when orthodoxy is seen to have points of Implausibility. It is then that those who are not making their careers as insiders begin to be heard. In Galileo's day there was no "community of physicists" in the modern sense. Darwin, so far from being a member of the community of biologists, had been trained for the church. Einstein, a clerk in the patent-office at Berne, was without a Ph.D. in physics when he presented his Special Theory of Relativity, at a time when orthodoxy was increasingly embarrassed by fundamental questions that it could not answer. (Einstein had been trained to the level of a high school teacher of physics, which is not the same as being trained to be a real working physicist). In the days of Thucydides there was no community of historians, and in the days of Tocqueville there was no community of political scientists. But there is, today, an Eng. Lit. community with a powerful sub-community in the field of Shakespeare studies, and it is evident to me that Ogburn has not been properly trained for the profession it represents. He ought to keep quiet then — just as Galileo ought to have kept quiet.

Sincerely,

Louis J. Helle, Professor  
The Ecole de Hautes Etudes Internationales  
in Geneva

Addendum by the Editor to the above letter:

Princeton's Murray Professor of English literature has been one of the most prominent and influential members of today's "Eng. Lit. community ...in the field of Shakespeare studies" - the priesthood to which Professor Helle refers. In his *Shakespeare A Biographical Handbook* (Yale University Press, 1961), Professor Bentley pronounces *ex cathedra*:

It is also noteworthy that the many people who have written to propose substitutes for the actor-dramatist themselves represent a variety of occupations, but among the journalists, accountants, lawyers, clergymen, chemists, doctors, politicians, and especially retired army officers, retired naval officers, and earnest ladies who advocate the dramatic accomplishments of the Earl of Rutland or the Earl of Oxford or Viscount St. Albane or Sir Anthony Shirley there have never been any professional scholars or critics of English literature. Anti-Stratfordianism has always been strictly for nonprofessionals.

Since, according to Professor Bentley, Henry James, *inter alia*, is not a professional scholar or critic of English literature, I must infer that his elitist classification encompasses only those who unequivocally accept the Stratfordian attribution. This would also disqualify, *inter alia*, Columbia University's Professor and Editor of "The Forum," Frederick Taber Cooper, who wrote in a review (1920) of J. Thomas Looney's "*Shakespeare Identified*:"

Here at last is a sane, dignified, arresting contribution to the abused and sadly discredited Shakespeare controversy. It is one of the most ingenious pieces of minute, circumstantial evidence extant in literary criticism...Every right-minded scholar who seriously cares for the welfare of letters in the bigger sense should face the problem that the book presents and argue it to a finish.

Professor Bentley's self-serving classification also made it conveniently unnecessary for him to research the career and profession of even one of the anti-Stratfordians whose work was carried in the compilation to which Charlton Ogburn refers in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (p. 151):

In the 1940s according to Samuel Schoenbaum, Joseph S. Gallant of Northwestern University compiled a bibliography of dissent from the conventional attribution of

Shakespeare's works. It came to six volumes in typescript and included 4,509 items, many of them hundreds of pages long - and that was thirty years ago; how greatly the list would be extended if brought up to date (for Professor Bentley, 1960) is anybody's guess.

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**NEWS ITEMS OF INTEREST COMPILED BY GARY GOLDSTEIN,  
PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR OF THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY**

\* The English paperback of Charlton Ogburn's *The Mystery of William SHAKESPEARE* (English title) has sold 5900 copies since November 1988!

\* The second annual dinner in celebration of the 439th birthday of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was held at the Harvard Faculty Club in Cambridge on April 14. Over sixty persons attended, including 7 trustees, dined on Elizabethan fare, were serenaded by the Boston Renaissance Ensemble and treated to a ritual Morris dance. This festive and congenial event was initiated and organized by trustee Charles Boyle.

A Trustees meeting was also held in Cambridge on April 15.

\* A two months seminar on the Shakespeare authorship question will be held in June and July 1989 at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, under the supervision of Felicia Londre, Director of that University's Repertory Theater.

\* John Nassivera's play on Edward de Vere, "All the Queen's Men," will be presented in Aguonquit, Maine for one week, starting July 10th. It will then move to the Westport Country Playhouse in Connecticut for a two-week run, July 17-31. Negotiations for additional presentations are proceeding with producers in Baltimore, Minneapolis and Dallas. A touring company is being formed and plans are for touring several Eastern cities before taking it to New York City for a Broadway production.

\* President Elisabeth Sears and Trustee Stephanie Caruana will publish privately a book on Edward de Vere/William Shakespeare entitled, "Oxford's Revenge: Shakespeare's Literary Development from Agamemnon to Hamlet." Publication is for summer 1989.

\* Shakespeare Oxford Society member Larry Wells of Oxford, Mississippi, has written a novel on Southampton, Oxford and Queen Elizabeth I entitled, "Shakespeare's Child." Oxford is portrayed as Shakespeare, with Southampton as his son. Presently, the manuscript is with editors in New York, who have yet to make a decision on whether to publish it.

\* The AMS Press reprint of Eva Turner Clark's *The Man Who Was Shakespeare* (1937) will be published this year. Mrs. Clark also wrote *Hidden Allusions In Shakespeare's Plays A Study of the Early Court Revels and Personalities of the Times* (3rd Revised Edition by Ruth Lloyd Miller, Kennikat Press, 1974)

\* British author Verily Anderson has written a biography of all 20 Earls of Oxford entitled, "The Veres of Castle Hedingham." It is being published this summer by Terrence Dalton in England. To my knowledge, no American publication is planned. (Details on how to obtain copies of the above mentioned books will be forthcoming.)

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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING:  
A MERRIE PRODUCTION HISTORY

Registered in 1600, 4 Augusti as "The Commedie of muche A doo about nothing a booke to be staied", the play "heth been sundrie times publikely ected" including two incredibly successful runs at the very populer Court Revels where it was alternately billed es "much adoe abowte nothings" and "Benedicte and Betteris" The cast included:

William Kempe .....Dogberry  
Richard Cowley .....Verges  
with "Enter Musicke" by Jacke Wilson

THE CRITICS SAID: (We think!)

"... Good plot! (Which I shall nowe use without further 'ado'!)"  
Middleton

"(We are) professed admirers of our Author"  
Beaumont and Fletcher

"Wait e minute... I wrote that!"  
Christopher Marlowe

"Couldn't have said it better myself..."  
Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford

"I laughed 'till I stopped!"  
Basil Pan, London Beare Baiter

(Printed in "Prologue" (April-May 1989), the official publication of the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.)

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## ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of The Shakespeare Oxford Society will be held on Friday Oct. 20 to Sunday Oct. 22, 1989 at the Airport Hilton in New Orleans, in conjunction with the 9th Annual Festival sponsored by the Jefferson County Arts Association.

Any person interested in presenting a paper at that Meeting should notify Ms. Stephanie Caruana, Chairman of the Research Committee (RR 1, Box 913, Napanoch, N.Y. 12458 - (914) 647-3608) -, as soon as possible. Time allotted for each presentation will be 20 minutes and 10 minutes for questions. Each person submitting to the Committee should send a summary of no more than 100 words to Ms. Caruana - deadline July 25, 1989. If chosen, the person should bring a typed copy of his or her presentation at the Meeting for inclusion in the *Shakespeare Oxford Society Annual*.

Details of the Meeting will be carried in the next Newsletter which will be mailed on Sept. 20, 1989.

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## JOIN SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY AND RECEIVE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to document and establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the universally recognized author of the works of William Shakespeare. Each Newsletter carries articles which impart a wide range of information and commentary which the editor considers relevant to that purpose. Some articles will inevitably contain opinions, deductions and evidence which some S.O.S. members believe to be invalid, inaccurate, irrelevant, or irrational. The Newsletter is always open to letters of dissent and correction.

Student \$10.00

Annual Dues Regular \$25.00

Sustaining \$50.00 or more

The Shakespeare Oxford Society does not have any paid staff and cannot rely on one volunteer to handle all communications and process all functions. As a result, the following three addresses should be used for the respective purposes as indicated:

1. First time and renewal membership dues and any outright tax deductible contributions to:

Shakespeare Oxford Society  
P.O. Box 147  
Clarksville, Maryland 21029

2. Requests for information about memberships to:

Victor Crichton  
207 W. 106th St.  
Apt. 10-D  
New York, NY 10025

3. Articles, Letters To The Editor and any other materials submitted for publication in the Newsletter to:

Morse Johnson, Editor  
Suite No. 819  
105 West 4th St.  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202



Morse Johnson, Editor  
105 West 4th Street, Suite #819, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

*"Believe nothing on the sole authority of your masters or priests."*

"Believe nothing on the faith of traditions, even though they have been held in honour for many generations and in divers places. Do not believe a thing because many speak of it. Do not believe on the faith of the sages of the past. Do not believe what you have imagined, persuading yourself that a god inspires you. Believe nothing on the sole authority of your masters or priests. After examinations, believe what you yourself may have tested and found to be reasonable, and conform your conduct thereto."

Gautama Buddha

"Many men will allege that my findings conflict with the opinion of certain men held in great reverence, without concerning themselves with the fact that my findings were born of pure and straightforward experience, which is the most dependable teacher."

da Vinci

(Contributed by David Lloyd Kreeger)

Who was this great magician - this mighty dramatist who was "not of an age, but for all time"? Who was the writer of *Venus and Lucrece* and the *Sonnets* and *Lear* and *Hamlet*? Was it William Shakspeare of Stratford, the Player? So it is generally believed, and that hypothesis I had accepted in unquestioning faith till my love of the works naturally led me to an examination of the life of the supposed author of them. Then I found that as I read my faith melted away "into thin air." It was, certainly, that I had (nor have I now) any wish to disbelieve. I was, and I am, altogether willing to accept the Player as the immortal poet if only my reason would allow me to do so. Why not? There, thank Heaven, in my bookcase are the Plays - there are *Hamlet* and *Othello*, and *Macbeth* and *Lear*, and *Henry IV*, and *Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It* and *The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale*, and the *Dream*, and the rest. They are "a joy for ever," and among the most precious of human possessions, whoever wrote them. But the question of authorship is, nevertheless, a most fascinating one. If it be true, as the Rev. Leonard Bacon wrote, that "The great world does not care sixpence who wrote *Hamlet*," the great world must, at the same time, be a very small world, and many of us must be content to be outside it. Having given then, the best attention I was able to give to the question, and more time, I fear, than I ought to have devoted to it, I was brought to the conclusion, as many others have been, that the man who is, truly enough, designated by Messrs. Gamett and Gosse as a "Stratford rustic," is not the true Shakespeare. I do not think (*pace* some of the pundits of literature) that this is the judgment of a fool or a fanatic. I venture to believe (*pace* Mr. Lee and Mr. Collins) that I am really quite sane; nay, more that I even have some powers of weighing evidence - powers which, I trust, have not become atrophied after more than a half century of life, and not inconsiderable professional experience. And it is just as a matter of evidence and reasonable probabilities that I have considered, and should desire the reader to consider, the question. I have then, in the following chapters, made an endeavor to set forth the evidence, and the arguments, or rather some of the evidence, and the arguments, (for they might be extended almost *ad infinitum*), which seems to me to make in favour of the negative proposition, viz., that Shakspeare of Stratford was not the author of the *Plays and Poems*. I have endeavored to avoid all fantastic theories, and although, of course, a certain amount of hypothesis is unavoidable (Is not every Life of Shakespeare for the most part built upon hypothesis, and rather a work of imagination than of true biography?), my wish has been to depart as little as possible from the realm of fact, so far as we can ascertain it and of legitimate argument founded thereon. I have made no attempt to deal with the positive side of the question. I leave it to others to say, if they can, who the great magician really was.

I am quite aware that by many (my book) will be thought to be time and labour wasted. The High Priests of Literature will treat it with frigid and contemptuous silence. The College of Stratfordian Cardinals will at once put it on the Index. The Grand Inquisitors — or Inquisitress! — of the Temple by Avon's sacred stream will decree that it shall be burnt (metaphorically, at any rate) by the common hangman, and "The brilliant Young Man," who has, perhaps, bestowed half-an hour to the subject, and therefore understands it in every detail, will, if he should condescend to notice it at all, see in it a grand opportunity for once more convulsing the world with his side-splitting original joke about "gammon of Bacon," or his famous paradox that "There is no Learning but Ignorance." Meanwhile, from the Professors of "Morbidity Psychology," those of them, at least, who are interested in homes for feeble-minded patients, I shall, no doubt, receive offers, on very reasonable terms, of board and lodging for the rest of my natural life. Yet am I sanguine enough to hope that by some open-minded and impartial readers the following chapters may be found to be not altogether devoid of interest, nor, possibly, of instruction. To such a reader, then, I venture to offer this work. "Cumtabulis animum censoris sumet honesti," and by "honesti" I mean one who is fair and honourable, and does not allow his reason and his judgment to be obscured by prejudice — still less by petulance and ill-temper. I think he will at least admit that there is such a thing as a "Shakespeare Problem."<sup>1</sup>

1. As I have said above, every "Life of Shakespeare" is, for the most part, built upon hypothesis, and rather a work of imagination than of true biography. Unfortunately many Shakespearean biographers and critics, not content with giving full rein to their imagination, resort to methods which in every other case than Shakespeare's would be condemned as inconsistent with the rules of common honesty. In this connection I wish particularly to direct attention to the misleading and disingenuous manner in which Chettle's supposed reference to Shakspeare is habitually miscited in flagrant violation of all canons of honest criticism.

(From The Preface of *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* by G. G. Greenwood.)

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RUMORS OF DISASTER, PREMONITIONS OF WAR  
by  
Tom Goff

Supporters of the seventeenth Earl of Oxford's claim to the identity of playwright "William Shakespeare" have often shown how much the Shakespeare plays — perhaps the history plays above all — reflect sensitive awareness of Elizabethan politics, scandal, and intrigue. (Hamlet says as much when he avers, in *Hamlet* 2.2.520, that the players "are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time.") In their *magnum opus*, *This Star of England*, Oxfordians Dorothy Ogburn and Charlton Ogburn, Sr., inform us that the two famous opening lines spoken by "Rumor" in *Henry the Fourth, Part Two* —

Open your ears, for which of you will stop  
The vent of hearing when loud Rumor speaks?

-- should help alert us to the play's many topical allusions. "Rumor's" words, say the Ogburns, were prompted by actual events of Elizabeth's reign, most of them occurring well before Shakspeare the Stratfordian could conceivably have faken a part, real or fictitious, in writing the Shakespeare plays.

In 1585 and '86 the Babington plot [To unseat Elizabeth and enthrone the Scots queen in her place] was brewing; and the fumes of treachery and rebellion darken the atmosphere of this drama. Rumor was rife. The Fugger News-Letters, reporting to the Continent on current affairs, were full of sensational surmises and scandals. (D. and C. Ogburn 723.)

The Ogburns also list the Throgmorton plot [another anti-Elizabeth conspiracy]; the presence of Spanish spies in England's ports; allusions to Sir Philip Sidney and the British campaign in the Low Countries; and Philip II of Spain's anger over his portrayal by English dramatists among the ingredients which served to keep Shakespeare's dark brew at a rolling boil. (703,723-728.)

With this in mind, we may be able to date *2 Henry IV's* Induction -- where "Rumor" first appears -- to the middle or late 1580's; nor is this all the information. If we turn the leaf of history one year past the Babington plot, to early 1587, we may find evidence allowing us to date *2 Henry IV's* opening to that very time: about a decade before the "consensus" date assigned it by Stratfordian tradition (1597-98; according to Barnet, xii). The implications -- favorable to the Earl of Oxford, unfavorable to William Shakspeare of Stratford -- seem unmistakable once we read just how ominous and widespread were the whispers in and out of London in the early months of that year, according to Queen Elizabeth's recent biographer, Carolly Erickson:

In January of 1587 fresh alarms swept the country. Rumors sprang from one another, creating unprecedented panic and breeding ever more fantastic news of imagined events.

The Spaniards had landed. They were at Milford, thousands strong, their huge cannon rumbling through the Welsh countryside and their grim legions of cutthroat troops marching ever closer to the capital.

The north was in revolt. It was a rising as stubborn and as ill-disposed toward the queen as the rising of 1569, only this time the Spaniards would aid the rebels and nothing could stop them.

London was in flames. The queen -- was she still living, or had she been assassinated, as some said? -- had had to flee. In all the confusion, [Mary] the queen of Scots had escaped. She was on her way to the northern rebels. Spaniards were moving toward the burning capital, their crested helmets silhouetted against the red glow of the night sky. Surely, these were the last days of the world. (Erickson 362.)

To appreciate the aptness of the play's Induction to its time, we need only compare these tidings of 1587 with "Rumors" wild stories (28-32) of King Henry's and Prince Hal's supposed deaths in 1403 at Shrewsbury:

... my office is  
To noise abroad, that Harry Monmouth fell  
Under the wrath of noble Hotspur's sword;  
And that the king before the Douglas' rage  
Stooped his anointed head as low as death.

[If critics are in less than perfect agreement that the work of "Rumor, painted full of tongues" (st. dir.) may help pinpoint the Induction to c. 1587, it may be because the poet was worried lest audiences read, between the lines, too many "surmises, jealousies, [and] conjectures" (16) for their own good or the realm's security: the substance of the Shrewsbury rumors is related in a mere four and a half lines. The author had the sense to sway audience opinion subtly, too; without blatant manipulation. But one thing is clear: nothing is said in Holinshed or Hall -- the poet's primary historical sources -- of such rumors sweeping England directly after the battle of Shrewsbury. The passage is evidently the playwright's addition.]

Erickson's account continues (362):

The whirl of rumor engulfed the court. The image of a realm in chaos shimmered in the air like a horrifying mirage, unreal yet threatening. Elizabeth fought toward her decision [to execute Mary, Queen of Scots], pressed as much by the wildfire of panic as by the urgent necessity for action. . .

By the first of February 1587, Elizabeth was ready to sign Mary's death warrant (383), and to face the Spanish Armada, which Drake was very shortly to beard at Cadiz (365); but she would have been the last person to wish it *said* she had acted out of panic or had been guided by rumor. At about this time, the monarch decided to take one, possibly two firm actions to stem the unprecedented flow of scandal, gossip and prophesying which was contributing to sap the loyalty and morale of her people.

First, a stern proclamation was issued against the circulating of rumor. Dated February 6, 1586 [-87], it is epitomized (in the authoritative *Bibliography of Royal Proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns*) as follows:

Rumors have been spread in many shires, and put into 'simple billets' in writing, raising "hues and cries" without warrant and causing extraordinary watches. The inventors, and those who spread them, are to be severely punished, and Constables are to be responsible for their spread unless they find the author. (Steele, procl. no. 792.)

As a glance at the *Bibliography* will confirm, if Shakespeare was inspired by a royal proclamation it was very likely this one; the relatively few similar ones issued during Elizabeth's reign were meant to deal either with printed libels in book or pamphlet form (not with crude or 'simple' billets); or with specific slanders and libels aimed at targets like Lord Buckhurst (Steele nos. 775, 769, 909).

Second, at this point the queen may have asked a great playwright to help quell the rumors by inserting a cautionary pronouncement into a new -- or perhaps already existing -- play. If Oxfordians have rightly analyzed the chain of causes and effects involved, Elizabeth had just secretly placed her preeminent court dramatist -- Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford -- on the royal payroll the previous June (Ogburn, 688-689), authorizing him to write plays which could entertain courtier and commoner alike while expressing the royal will in matters of order, obedience, and that "...degree... / Which is the ladder of all high designs" (*Troilus* 1.3.101-102). Enabled by a pension of a thousand pounds *per annum* -- granted him under mysterious circumstances -- to produce one or two plays a year (Ogburn 19, 402), he may have been working, by February 1587, on both *Henry V* and *2 Henry IV*, given that *Henry V* also seems to date from the period directly following the queen's grant to the earl by Privy Seal Warrant (Clark 772-790, Goff 74-89). At any rate though de Vere seems not to have adopted the pseudonym "Shakespeare" irrevocably until c. 1598 (Ogburn 744-749), he may well have thought himself a theatrical "spear-shaker" in the queen's service from the time of his annuity. Certainly his Induction to *Henry the Fourth, Part Two* reads as if composed expressly to identify, even to crush, "Rumor's" immediate challenge to Elizabeth's authority:

...I speak of peace while covert enmity  
Under the smile of safety wounds the world.  
And who but Rumor, who but only I,  
Make fearful muster and prepared defense  
Whiles the big year, swoln with some other grief,  
Is thought with child by the stern tyrant war,  
And no such matter? (9-15.)

It may be possible to trace the specific connections to early 1587. First, more than one plot on Elizabeth's own life had been made lately under the "smile of safety," including that of William Parry, member of Parliament and employee of the trustworthy Sir Francis Walsingham (Erickson 357-358); traitors Rowland Yorke and Sir William Stanley smilingly surrendered important English outposts in the Netherlands to Spain; and whether Elizabeth herself thought so, many about her believed the ongoing Spanish peace negotiations a humbug, according to Ridley, 275 (events were to prove that opinion correct).

Second, Oxford's words about "fearful muster and prepared defense" apply pretty closely to England in January 1587, with the Spanish armies not yet engaged -- that is, on or about the British coasts and waters themselves -- and the muster-rolls filled with men apt to tremble at a danger anticipated but not yet seen. The suspense lingered through the very eve of the Armada's attack; Howarth, 90-91, reports that

Ashore in 1588, the English waited for the armada, not in panic, but certainly with healthy apprehension. They had heard the kind of rumours one might expect, half bred by fear and half by propaganda: that the armada had orders to kill all Englishmen except boys under seven, that it was led by Inquistadores and laden with instruments of torture; that it carried nooses to hang the men and scourges for the women; and, most ingenious of all, in a report from one of [ex-ambassador Don Bernardino de] Mendoza's men in England, that it was bringing two or three thousand wet nurses to suckle the infants orphaned by the massacre.

What could even the queen's greatest poet do against such talk? Evidently he tried his best to counter it: Oxford was assuming more than a little poetic license in asserting that what looked like war was "no such matter" (Induction 15), with the Armada in open preparation; but his intent would have been to scotch the persistent rumors, not to report the literal truth.

But what was the "other grief" (13) with which the present year was pregnant, if not war? Here and elsewhere, one suspects that the queen's relations with her playwright were often less than easy (often the case with patron and artist -- Michelangelo and Pope Julius II come to mind); and if Elizabeth Tudor was displeased at all with *2 Henry IV*, it could have been due to that faintly ominous mention of "some other grief," with its words addressed to her private understanding. For Elizabeth was faced with a harrowing decision, one momentous enough to contribute in removing Charles I from his throne some sixty years later: whether to execute Mary, Queen of Scots. It is at least likely that when "Rumor" noises it about that "the king [Henry IV] before the Douglas' rage / Stooped his anointed head as low as death" (31-32), the dramatist's thoughts were occupied more with the work of a headsman's axe upon the execution block than with the action and aftermath of war to be treated in the play at hand. [Whether we are entitled from this surmise to date the Induction's composition more precisely, who can say? The proclamation against rumor went forth on February 6, 1587 (February 16 N.S.), while Mary was executed (Ridley 282) on February 8 (February 18 N.S.); certainly the lateness of year made Oxford's pregnancy metaphors appropriate, since English custom decreed that it was still 1586 until March 25 (Ridley, x). But whatever the state of his Induction at the fateful time, the poet -- who was not among the ten persuaded by Burghley to sign Mary's death warrant (Looney 1.302) -- was probably determined to keep his original thoughts on the matter.]

If the queen was not offended by Oxford's apparent reference to her impending act of regicide -- she could have thought the poet meant something else by that "other grief," a dearth of corn and other food-stuffs in some counties being one possibility (Hurstfield 275, Steele no. 791) -- she could well have been pleased by her chief peer's prompt poetical action for stifling loose talk: the powerful effect produced in the theatre by a good actor playing "Rumor" is apt to make us forget how quickly "Rumor's" efforts are brought to grief. Lord Bardolph enters with wild tidings of victory for Hotspur and Douglas (*2 Henry IV* 1.1.11-23); but then Travers and Morton enter by turns with gradually worsening -- though truthful -- news. And that is about all "Rumor" accomplishes. We are also to grasp the point that it is the triumphant government army, not the rebel force, which has firm possession of the truth. *How foolish of you, my countrymen*, Shakespeare seems to say, *to place your trust in idle, easily disproven gossip, which scatters through the air at the first puff of wind!*

So we leave Elizabeth and Shakespeare at this moment in history, regarding each other's work -- with what mixture of sympathy and disapproval we may never be able to say. But in using the braggart "Rumor" to ironic purpose, the world's greatest dramatist seems to tell us of his, Shakespeare's, perfect assurance in affairs of state: assurance possible only to an eminent courtier like Edward de Vere. Ultimately, much of his confidence may have been due to whatever trust he now won in the queen's eyes, for helping put an end to dangerous rumor when England's morale most required steady and confident courage. As he was to write elsewhere (*King John* 5.7.117-118),

...nought shall make us rue,  
If England to itself do rest but true.

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## CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 18TH JUDICIAL COURT Du Page County, Illinois

Bonnie M. Wheaton  
Associate Judge  
Elizabeth Altick McCarthy, Editor  
ELEVEN Magazine

July 26, 1989

Re: "The Shakespeara Mystery"

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

Following the "Frontline" program on the Shakespeara-Oxford controversy, I obtained (with great difficulty) a copy of Charlton Ogburn's book, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. It is an exhaustively researched work which goes into infinitely greater detail than was possible in the "Frontline" report. The first half of the 804 page tome tore apart the argument that the great body of work was written by the Stratfordian William Shakespeara, and the second half built up the argument on behalf of Edward De Vere. From the perspective of legal argument, not a jury in the world, after reading the book, would doubt that the Earl of Oxford wrote Shakespeare's works.

After reading the book, I had a wonderful telephone conversation with Mr. Ogburn at his home in



Beaufort, South Carolina. I suspect that the true authorship of Shakespeare's works, like the whereabouts of Jimmy Hoffa, will always remain a mystery.

I read the book out of intellectual curiosity and with an open mind. The cheerful Professor Bevington's facile arguments in your August issue are all addressed to Mr. Ogburn's opus, and I commend the book to anyone who loves the work of "Shakespeare," regardless of its authorship.

Very truly yours,

Bonnie M. Wheaton

The Honorable Bonnie M. Wheaton

5 August 1989

Dear Judge Wheaton:

I could write far more eloquently of what our telephone conversation and your matchless letter to the Editor of Eleven Magazine have meant to me were I not just out of the hospital and suffering some debilitating and painful abscess in the thigh wherein I went. But if my ills sap my vitality they are rendered much easier to bear by a letter like yours. I can hardly imagine a writer however acclaimed who had written a book however masterful who would not be set up and encouraged about himself by such a letter . . .

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That David Bevington! All the same old stuff! And how the professoriat loves to pull out that supposedly trump card of the dating of the plays! They never seem to take it in that by the same criterion with which they aim to eliminate Oxford as three of Shakespeare's plays had never been heard of until seven years after Will Shakspeare's death.

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However, there is one question I should very like to see put to the Professor. The author of Shakespeare's works was, in creative genius, second only to God, according to Heinrich Heine. He was "the greatest of intellects," said Thomas Carlyle. In the first known mention of his name as that of a playwright he was termed the best of the English for both tragedy and comedy. His most authoritative literary contemporary proclaimed of him that he was the "Soul of the Age! The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!" and hailed him as his nation's triumph and the star of poets. Can it be doubted, then, that all other writers of the time, all the actors, members of the university world, and luminaries of the Court would have had an interest, at least, in knowing him, would, indeed, have exerted themselves to make his acquaintance? How, then, are we to explain that not a single person alive indicated that he had ever seen or had any communication with a poet or dramatist called William Shakespeare and that, in fact, only three claimed after he was dead - years after - to have been acquainted with him and to have done so then only in ambivalent terms? Can we possibly confront these facts and not conclude that there was something very fishy indeed about the attribution of Shakespeare's works?

Again, my very great thanks to you for your most valued support, and with every good wish,

Sincerely yours,

Charlton Ogburn

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

June 26, 1989

To the Editor:

I have just today mailed my membership dues, with pleasure and with respect for all those responsible for advancing the cause of truth in "stimulating objective interest in the Shakespeare authorship question."

I want you to know how much I appreciate the recent Newsletter which devoted most of its content to the PBS Frontline production. My interest in the program was initiated by Charlton Ogburn's excellent book, a well-thumbed copy of which is within easy reach. I hope that somewhere today there is someone who has the youth, energy, perseverance, wisdom, and investigative skills to follow in Mr. Ogburn's large footsteps.

While the review published in the Newsletter did in fact merely highlight evidence which has been covered in detail by members of the Society, I was glad to see that the Frontline production attracted so much positive attention in the press. I hope it was of more than passing interest.

I felt a mixture of disgust and amusement at the comment quoted from Professor Bentley; in particular his claim that "Anti-Stratfordianism has always been strictly for nonprofessionals." It seems to me that his demeaning of dissent by such nonprofessionals as journalists, accountants, doctors, lawyers, retired military officers and the like was not only absurd but the charge was obviously wrong - in view of the long list of professional scholars and critics who have questioned the authenticity of the Stratford Shakespeare; to say nothing of the distinguished Anti-Stratford authors who are probably as well informed about William Shakespeare and his Works as any Stratfordian professor of English Lit--and possess, in addition, the insight to know how difficult it is to separate an author's works and background. No serious writer would disagree with Lydia Bronte's belief that "Writers till the soil of their own experience for their richest harvest."

But suppose, just for the hell of it, that Bentley and his colleagues are right in defining Anti-Stratfordianism as the pursuit of nonprofessionals. History proves they actually weaken their case. It was a nonprofessional businessman -- Heinrich Schliemann--who set out to prove that the orthodox community of archaeology was wrong in stating that Troy was nothing more than a figment of Homer's imagination. Schliemann used Homer as a roadmap to locate and uncover not one but nine Troys piled one atop the other.

It was another nonprofessional--a young architect, named Michael Ventris--who broke the code that led to his decipherment of the Mycenaean Linear B tablets, proving that the language on the tablet was Greek--a finding diametrically opposed to the opinion of professional archaeologists that the script could not possibly be Greek. Today, of course, Ventris Linear B decipherment is said to be one of the outstanding achievements of scholarship--no thanks to the scholars.

It may well be that nonprofessionals, uninhibited by close-minded arrogance, are unafraid to search the dark corners. How sad it is that indifferent scholarship, and the determination of pedestrian scholars to protect their flanks and preserve the status quo, continue to perpetuate mythologies that mock the aims of education and fail to challenge the minds of those who look to the academic world for enlightenment. Which brings to mind the advice of one of my more adventurous college professors who told me, in some despair, that the only way to get a good education was to move to a town with a good library.

Gene Williamson

To the Editor:

May 20, 1989

Mark McPherson did a marvelous job of organizing The Great Shakespeare Duel - "A Trial of the Centuries" on May 14, 1989 in Southfield, Michigan. He was the anti-Stratford lawyer and Judge Wahls, last year's trial judge, stepped down from the Bench to be the Pro-Stratford defense attorney. A very bright quick-witted woman judge presided. The proceeding was very realistic except for the great witticisms and

barbs exchanged by the participants, particularly the attorneys, who are good friends. Judge Wahl brought up all the old Stratford chestnuts about "The Sweet Swan of Avon" and the "Seacoast of Bohemia." We had specifically covered those items in our pre-trial conference.

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Stephanie Caruana was a well informed and excellent anti-Stratford witness. The other witnesses were non-committed but remarkably helpful, perhaps more so just because they were non-partisan. A book-seller, William Tilmore, made the important observation that the "Orthodox" biographies sit on his shelves forever. No one shows any interest in them. However, any books that question the authorship sell as fast as he can stock them. It seems that the general public is begging for information, in spite of all the efforts of Academia to retain the status quo!

A third witness, a History professor, Edwin DeWindt, who spends his summers searching ancient records in London, emphasized the wealth of records available for almost everyone and every great event, except for items about the man from Stratford.

The fourth witness was a lawyer, Jerry Kaufman, who did not profess to be an Oxfordian, though he carried Charlton's book until he took the witness stand and Mark also labelled him an Oxfordian. He was an excellent witness and withstood every attempt by Judge Wahl to trip him up on legal technicalities in order to discredit him as a witness.

Then, Mark gave his summation quietly and confidently, for he had obviously proved his point. Judge Wahl, however, fully aware that he was losing, used every standard dramatic play for winning over the jury. He moved his lectern next to the jury box, ignoring cameras and audience, and spoke in confidential tones, most persuasively, appealing to the panel's "common sense" and asking them to "accept scholarly experts' theories" etc. The jury members squirmed, and all were visibly affected by this personal approach.

When the jury came back after the recess, they gave a verdict of eight for Stratford and four for anti-Stratford. Then the vote from the audience was handed to the judge, who announced the results. Though many in the audience had abstained from voting, the tally was a little more than 54% against Shaksper's authorship. This brought much enthusiastic applause and a very wry smile from Judge Wahl, who may now even be a convert. He was well aware before the proceeding was over that he was on the losing side. A year ago, only a third of the vote was anti-Stratford, this year it was more than half, what will next year bring? Mark says that he feels ready to go all out next year and offer a choice between Oxford and Shaksper. He feels that Detroit is now ready for the whole picture.

Betty Sears

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### MASKED ADONIS AND STAINED PURPLE ROBES

By

Peter R. Moore

On October 22, 1593 an obscure poet named Thomas Edwards (apparently a minor courtier) registered a book of four poems which was published in 1595. Edwards' work consists of two major poems, "Cephalus and Procris" and "Narcissus," each followed by an envoy. The work was republished with lengthy commentary by the Rev. W.E. Buckley in 1882, and was extensively discussed by Charlotte C. Stopes in "Thomas Edwards, Author of 'Cephalus and Procris, Narcissus,'" *Modern Language Review*, vol. xvi, Jul-Oct 1921 (to both of whom I am indebted).

The envoy to "Narcissus" consists mostly of praise for six or seven contemporary poets, who are nicknamed with the titles or subjects of some of their poems; thus Spenser is called Collyn, Daniel is Rosamond, Watson is Amintas, and Marlowe is Leander. And then follow these three stanzas:

Adon deafly masking thro,  
Stately troupes rich conceltd,  
Shew'd he well deserved to  
Loves delight on him to gaze

1

And had not love her selfe intreated,  
Other nymphs had sent him baies. 5

Eke in purple roabes distaind,  
Amid'st the Center of this clime,  
I have heard saie doth remaine,  
One whose power floweth far, 10  
That should have bene of our rime  
The onely object and the star.

Well could his bewitching pen,  
Done the Muses objects to us  
Although he differs much from men 15  
Tilting under Frieries,  
Yet his golden art might woo us  
To have honored him with haies.

Before getting down to business, a few minor points need to be touched on. The word "deafly" (line 1) presumably means 'deftly'; of the first six examples of 'deftly' in the OED (dating from 1460 to 1710), four spell the word without the 't'. "baies" (1.6) is middle English for "bays" (laurels). "(T)roupes" (1.2) probably means 'tropes,' that is, figures of speech. "Eke" (1.7) is middle English for "also." The phrase "Tilting under Frieries" (1.16) has elicited no good explanation, and I have none to offer (Edwards is sometimes murky). Edwards was fond of the language of arms, heraldry, and tournaments, and he used the word 'tilting' to mean 'striving,' particularly with regard to poetic endeavor. "Frieries" could refer to the Blackfriars Theater, but as Mrs. Stopes remarked, the old Blackfriars Theater closed some years earlier (the Earl of Oxford's company being among its last tenants), while the new Blackfriars had yet to open.

And now to business. "Adon" (1.1) is unquestionably a reference to Shakespeare, whose immensely popular "Venus and Adonis" appeared in early 1593, with an author's dedication signed "William Shakespeare." But Edwards says that Shakespeare was "masking thro" (1.1). There are several subdefinitions of the verb 'to mask' in the OED (to wear a mask literally or figuratively, to be disguised or concealed, to participate in a masque), but all involve disguise. Stratfordians are cordially invited to explain why Edwards said that the author who published "Venus and Adonis" under the name William Shakespeare was "masking thro." To Oxfordians the answer is obvious.

And now to the next two stanzas on a great poet "in purple roabes distaind" (1.7). Much conjecture was made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the identity of this 'center poet,' as F.J. Furnivall dubbed him, and I will try to summarize briefly and clearly. First, though this has not been suggested before, the second and third stanzas can be read as a continuation of the first, that is, the 'center poet' could be Adonis or Shakespeare. Next, "purple roabes" neatly limits the candidates to two categories, peers and certain high legal officials (including judges). None of the proposed candidates falls into the latter group (Francis Bacon was suggested, but he earned his purple robes some years later), so we are left with four peers who were put forward by orthodox scholars: Lord Buckhurst, the Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Essex (all discussed by the Rev. Buckley), and the 5th Earl of Derby (Mrs. Stopes' candidate).

One small item of evidence, not previously noticed, provides a bit of support for two of these candidates: Edwards' use of the word "star" (1.12). The only charge on Oxford's shield was a star, while the crest of Buckhurst's coat of arms was likewise a star. There was no star on the arms of Essex or Derby.

All four noblemen were poets, though Oxford and Buckhurst easily overshadow Essex and Derby, both in contemporary reputation and in modern criticism (my argument for Oxford's modern reputation rests on Sir E.K. Chambers' opinion, as given in *The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse*). Oxford, Derby, and Essex were also munificent patrons at the time of Edwards' poem, while Buckhurst's literary involvement had ceased two decades earlier.

Mrs. Stopes' case for Derby rests on her assertion that "(t)here is something against each of" the others, though she does not say what is against them (I will return to this point), and to several particular arguments in favor of Derby. First, Derbyshire is close to the geographical "center" (1.8) of England

(though the Earl never lived there and his estates were mostly in Lancashire). Next, Derby's "power flow(ed) far" (1.10) in that the Earls of Derby was also a potential heir to Queen Elizabeth. Finally, Mrs. Stopes feels that Derby had a particularly high standing in the eyes of English poets, because Thomas Nash praised him effusively in 1592 and criticized Edmund Spenser for omitting Derby from the courtiers praised in the dedicatory sonnets in *The Faerie Queene* of 1590. Out of respect for Mrs. Stopes' fairness and industry, I will offer another argument for her candidate. The 5th Earl of Derby was known for most of his life as Lord Strange (he inherited the earldom in September 1593 and died the following April), and perhaps Edwards was referring to this title when he wrote "Although he *differs* much from men" (1.15).

Several weaknesses of Mrs. Stopes' arguments have already been indicated parenthetically, but more counterarguments may be added. If I thought that Edwards was talking about geography when he wrote "the center of this Clime," then I would argue that, with a bit of poetic license, Oxfordshire is not far from the center of England. But it seems to me that Edwards was speaking figuratively, meaning that his poetical peer was the center of England in almost every respect (particularly the cultural) other than the geographic.

As for his "power floweth far," Buckhurst and Essex were politically more powerful than Derby, while Oxford was still one of the Queen's favorites. From the point of view of the relatively humble Edwards, all of these men were powerful. But again I think that Edwards was speaking figuratively; earlier in his poem he referred to Spenser's "power," and I doubt that he meant his political clout. In the world of poesy, Oxford, Derby, and Essex were all powers, while Buckhurst had been one.

As for Nash's comment, he was presumably bidding for Derby's patronage, and extravagant praise is what most patrons expect. Moreover, not only did Spenser (whom Edwards worshiped above all others) omit Derby from those he lauded in *The Faerie Queen*, he specifically included Oxford, Essex, and Buckhurst. Essex's sonnet comes before the other two, though he is not praised for any connection to literature. Oxford's comes next, and he is proclaimed to be "most deare" to the Muses. After eight more sonnets comes Buckhurst's, who is lauded for his "learned Muse."

It was presumably the foregoing arguments that Mrs. Stopes had in mind when she wrote that "(t)here is something against" Oxford, Essex, and Buckhurst, but, as has been shown, a close analysis indicates that Derby emerges with no advantage whatsoever. As for my argument about the title Lord Strange, it may be rebutted by noting that the 'center poet' "differs much from men" specifically in that he is engaged in "Tilting under Frieries," and I fear that that phrase is so clipped and cryptic as to deny any confident explanation (though I encourage others to think of one). Also, if Edwards' line 15 favors Derby, the reference to a "star" in line 12 favors Oxford and Buckhurst. So far, all four lords are still in the ring, with Oxford slightly ahead on points (perhaps due to my bias), but there are several more items to consider.

First, Rev. Buckley and Mrs. Stopes note that for some reason the 'center poet' is not identified by a poetical nickname as are the others that Edwards acclaims. As has been stated, this could be because the two stanzas praising the 'center poet' continue the praise for 'Masked Adonis/Shakespeare'. But there is one word that Rev. Buckley and Mrs. Stopes ignore: "distaind" (1.7). The OED gives three subdefinitions for 'distain' (which Shakespeare used as a synonym for 'rape' in *Richard III*: to discolor, to defile or dishonor, and to deprive of color or brightness. Clearly our 'center poet' or poetical peer has suffered some eclipse or loss of honor; there is a stain on his purple robes. As of 1593-95, Essex was the Queen's prime favorite, loaded with glory, honors, and offices. Derby was never touched by scandal (he rejected the one approach made to him by expatriate Catholic conspirators) and held high offices in the north of England. Buckhurst was always the soul of respectability, favored as the Queen's second cousin, was a Privy Councillor, and, following a spell of disfavor in 1587 for political opposition to the Earl of Leicester, recouped by being made a Knight of the Garter in 1589, as well as an ambassador in 1589 and 1591. As regards Edwards' 'center poet,' Essex, Derby, and Buckhurst have just been knocked out. It is a different story with Oxford.

Oxford was a prankster and a truant in his youth, repudiated his wife (the daughter of Lord Burghley) in 1576, was at the center of two major scandals in 1580 and 1581, was expelled from Court for two years, during which time he and his henchmen defended themselves in a murderous feud with the kinsmen of a Maid of Honor that he had gotten with child (though her subsequent career suggests that Oxford may not exactly have been a vile seducer). He reunited with his wife in 1581 (though his all powerful father-in-law continued to complain of him) and was socially rehabilitated in 1583. He served against the Armada and was offered military commands in 1585 and 1588, but neither worked out. From 1589 on, his life seems

free of scandal, but the records of his activities are reduced to a suspicious trickle. Dr. A.P. Grosart, a leading nineteenth century Elizabethan scholar, wrote that "an unlifted shadow lies across his memory," while his twentieth century biographer, B.M. Ward, entitled his section on the years 1589 to 1604 "The Recluse." Oxfordians and Stratfordians alike agree that there was something of a cloud over Oxford.

Mrs. Stopes feels that Edwards' statement "*I have heard say doth remaine*" (1.9) means that the author of "Narcissus" did not personally know the 'center poet,' "and was fearful of offending him by giving him a name." Her first point is plausible but not conclusive, while her second point is less plausible. Edwards' assertion that he is operating on hearsay is more likely an escape hatch in case he had given offense to the authorities, a familiar device in that era (for a contemporaneous example, see "Hadrian Dorrell's" introduction to "Willobie his Avisa"). The social customs and taboos of Elizabethan England were tricky, but simply naming Lord So-and-so as a great poet was common enough, e.g., Spenser's dedicatory sonnets to *The Faerie Queene*, and there were several recognized ways of identifying people without naming them (we have already seen two methods: references to coats of arms or to a poet's works). In fine, Mrs. Stopes doesn't push her logic far enough. The word "distaind," Edwards' reference to hearsay, and his failure to identify clearly the 'center poet' add up to a strong indication that Edwards was treading on thin ice, which makes no sense for Derby, but does make sense if he was speaking of Oxford.

I do not claim to have proven that the 'center poet' in his stained purple robes was Oxford (as I have not considered every other member of the House of Lords), but that he is the only one of the four peers suggested by orthodox scholars who fits the bill. Let us say that Oxford was probably the 'center poet,' and let us keep in mind that his praise immediately follows a reference to Shakespeare wearing a mask.

Edwards' mention of a poetical peer with a stain on his robes was presumably written in 1593, and it needs to be considered in the context of that year, during which Nash and also Thomas Kyd wrote of noble patrons without giving names. Similarly, Edwards' description of 'masked Adonis' should be added to the category of Odd Things Said About Shakespeare (e.g., Davies of Hereford's mention of the stage staining his pure gentle blood).

Addendum. The Rev. Buckley's discussion of the Earl of Oxford includes an unelaborated statement that Coxeter said that Oxford made a translation of Ovid. Thomas Coxeter (1689-1747) and his works are briefly described in the Dictionary of National Biography. The DNB gives Coxeter rather low marks for reliability, but presumably his statement about Oxford was based on something. However I have not been able to locate Coxeter's remark; I suggest that someone with better reference sources ought to follow up on this matter, which tallies nicely with J. Thomas Looney's conjecture that Oxford had a hand in Golding's *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. Coxeter's evidence might amount to nothing, but it could lead us to material of real value; at any rate, it seems that he knew something that we don't know.

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#### SIMILAR LETTERS TO DIFFERENT EDITORS

(The Baltimore Sun, May 30, 1989)

#### SHAKESPEARE NEVER PLAYED THE ROSE

Editor: Once again misinformation about William Shakespeare is being propagated in the media. The occasion this time arises from the efforts to preserve the historic Elizabethan theater, The Rose, from the developers' incursions.

In an article from the London Bureau of The Sun [May 16], it is stated that Shakespeare "had acted" at The Rose. The assertion is without documentation: Indeed, there is evidence against it.

The evidence is found in an important theatrical source book of the Shakespearean period. From 1591 to 1609, Phillip Henslowe, a co-proprietor of The Rose, kept a compendious "Diary" of payments made to playwrights and actors he engaged as well as a list of the plays he brought and produced.

Many of Henslowe's listings bear Shakespearian-sounding titles. Several entries for his payments appear in the handwriting of the payees themselves. These include the names of most of the prominent playwrights of the day, such as Marston, Jonson, Dekker, Webster, Munday, Chettle, Watson and many others, both major and minor. Conspicuous, certainly, is the absence - in this virtual "Who's Who" of the theater - of Shakespeare's name [in any spelling variant] which is mentioned not once in either the capacity of actor or playwright.

Surely Henslowe's silence is inexplicable, if it is alleged that Shakespeare not only wrote his plays for Henslowe's theater but acted in them as well. At a time in his life when money would have been especially important to him (as it seems to have been in his later, litigious affluence). Shakespeare would not have been expected to perform all his work without compensation.

The reasons for preserving the theatrical heritage of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period are abiding. But they cannot be based upon mythical and undocumented associations on the part of the mysterious Stratford citizen, whose recorded biography is non-literary, and whose "career" on the stage is nearly as insubstantial.

Gordon C. Cyr.

Baltimore

The writer was executive director from 1976 to 1988 of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

New York Times, July 9, 1989



ROSE THEATER

*SOMETHING MISSING*

To the Editor Arts & Leisure Section:

In his article describing the uncovering in London of the remnants of the Rose, an Elizabethan theater ["Excavating in the Name of Rose," June 11] Anthony Burgess unwittingly uncovers a mystery that was not revealed in the widely reviewed and provocative PBS "Frontline" production of "The Shakespeare Mystery."

Mr. Burgess points out that Philip Henslowe, a theatrical producer, had commissioned plays of Shakespeare's at the Rose. In fact, according to the eminent Shakespearean scholar, Sir Sidney Lee, Shakespeare's earliest "pronounced successes alike as an actor and dramatist" were in Henslowe's theater in the early 1590's. Mr. Burgess also notes that Henslowe's son-in-law, Edward Alleyn, was then the leading actor at the Rose, later became a theatrical producer on his own and was the founder of Dulwich College.

Henslowe kept a meticulously detailed "Diary" dating from 1591 to 1609, in which practically all the dramatists of that time are repeatedly mentioned. Alleyn also kept papers and memoirs in which the names



of the prominent actors and playwrights are repeatedly mentioned. Nowhere, however, is the name of William Shakespeare found in either Henslowe's "Diary" or Alleyn's papers and memoirs.

Why would both Henslowe and Alleyn intentionally - it could not conceivably have been a mutual oversight - omit the name of the towering and prolific genius in their profession? Why, moreover, would most of the distinguished playwrights and poets of that period also never, as far as we know, mention his name, e.g., Sir Francis Bacon; George Chapman; Henry Chettle; Thomas Dekker; Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford; Robert Greene; John Lyly; Christopher Marlowe; Thomas Middleton; Thomas Nashe; George Peele; Sir Walter Raleigh; Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke; Queen Elizabeth 1; Edmund Spenser and Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton?

For those scholars who for more than 100 years have been convinced that the identity of the person who wrote under the name of William Shakespeare was, for documented social and political reasons, authoritatively and effectively concealed, the answer is self-evident. For those scholars who subscribe to the Stratfordian attribution, there is no rational answer.

Morse Johnson  
Cincinnati

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*WHO WROTE IT, CONT*  
(New York Times, August 6, 1989)

*Flat Earthers?*

To the Editor Arts & Leisure Section:

Oh, no, not the "who wrote Shakespeare" controversy again! The few plain facts of the matter are that there is considerable evidence that the actor from Stratford-on-Avon wrote the plays and essentially none that he didn't.

Morse Johnson [Letters, July 9] is exercised that Bacon, Chapman, Chettle, Dekker, Sir Walter Raleigh, Queen Elizabeth and a host of others make no mention of Shakespeare. I'm afraid that Mr. Johnson, like most of the anti-Shakespeareans (the literary equivalent of the Flat Earth Society and the Creationists) betrays a considerable ignorance of Elizabethan life and manners.

Shakespeare, as a matter of fact, never mentions any of the above except indirectly, the Queen. Does that prove their nonexistence? People didn't go around "mentioning" each other the way they do in today's world of gossip, newspaper interviews and talk shows.

And the Oxfordians and others like them, in their desperate desire to disbelieve that a country bumpkin who never went to university could write well, invariably and conveniently overlook the fact that Heminges and Condell, his fellow actors, brought out a volume of his collected plays, the First Folio of 1623, that Ben Jonson wrote a lengthy verse eulogy to preface it, that several other poets contributed commendatory verses, etc. etc.

As in any case, why this hysterical desire to "prove" that the Earl Of Oxford or Christopher Marlowe or Sir Francis Bacon(!) wrote "Hamlet" or "Macbeth"? The crux of the matter is that they are fine plays regardless of whose name is on the title page. As are, say, the plays of Sophocles (whose authorship is never questioned, though it is far less provable than Shakespeare's).

Let's heed Shakespeare's plea engraved on his tombstone: "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear/ To dig the dust enclosed here!"

James Rosenberg  
Williamstown, Mass.

Dear Professor Rosenberg:

August 9, 1989

Since, understandably, the New York Times does not open up its Letters column for a continuous interchange, I am writing to you as to the following accusation in your letter (Times, 8/6/89) which was prompted by my letter (Times, 7/9/89):

"...Oxfordians and others like them... invariably and conveniently overlook the fact that Heminges and Condell brought out a volume of his collected plays, the First Folio of 1623, that Ben Jonson wrote a lengthy verse eulogy to preface it, that several other poets contributed commendatory verses, etc., etc."

To the exact contrary, all of the comprehensive works known to me and written in the 20th century by "Oxfordians and others like them invariably" dissect the materials in the First Folio in detail and at length. For example, one chapter in G. G. Greenwood's *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* (1908) and 14 consecutive pages in Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (1984) are devoted solely to the First Folio and it is frequently referred to in other pages in those books. I do not, of course, refer to articles and books which analyze a particular segment of the evidence relevant to the authorship question and about which the materials in that Folio would provide no enlightening information or insights.

Since your all-encompassing accusation clearly implies that it is based on documented fact, you have patently and fallaciously denigrated the credibility of "Oxfordians and others like them" and inexcusably misinformed the otherwise uninformed. It seems to me that as a conscientious and responsible professor and Shakespearean scholar you are obligated to write a retraction of that accusation and request the New York Times to print it.

Sincerely,

Morse Johnson

cc: Editor of Arts & Leisure Section of the New York Times.

(Professor Rosenberg replied to my 8/9/89 letter in a letter dated 8/16/89.)

August 25, 1989

Dear Professor Rosenberg:

Both in your letter to the N.Y. Times and in reply to my letter, you affirm that the Stratfordian attribution essentially relies on the First Folio, particularly Ben Jonson's eulogy therein and the prefatory and laudatory letters by Heminge and Condell which precede it. In the last sentence of your reply, you write:

Maybe they were written by a prostitute from the East End of London (that would be marvelous!), but it is the plays I care about, not whose name is on the cover.

You have coincidentally forged a bizarre link with the First Folio by hypothetically, albeit whimsically, classifying Shakespeare as a "prostitute," while Ben Jonson's eulogy metaphorically, but *not* whimsically, classifies Heminge and Condell as "whores." In his *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (Dodd, Mead 1984) Charlton Ogburn delineates Jonson's metaphor, the background of which starts with the first couplet of his poem (pp. 229-231):

To draw no envy (Shakespeare) on thy name,  
Am I thus ample to thy book, and fame;  
(To bring no harm upon your name, I shall be liberal, unstinting, to your plays and your fame.)

While I confess thy writings to be such,  
As neither man, nor muse, can praise too much  
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage . . .

(As all men assent to be so [ Suddenly, after all these years of seeming gross under-valuation of Shakespeare's plays, it appears that they are universally held to be beyond praise by man or even muse!])

... But these ways  
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise"  
(But the ways taken in what precedes this were not the paths I meant to take in praising you.)

For seeliest ignorance on these may light  
Which, when it sounds at best, but echo's right;  
(For blindest ignorance may fasten upon the testimonials we have heard and tell us that which, even at its most plausible, merely echoes what is right.)

Or blind affection, which doth ne're advance  
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance.  
(Or a blind predilection might do so, which never advances the truth but gropes its way and urges us to accept what it comes upon by chance.)

Or crafty malice, might pretend this praise,  
And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.  
(Or those whom we have heard might pretend to praise the author out of malice, intending to ruin him by seeming to elevate him [i.e., by implying that he is of such low standing that he must be made worthy by being dedicated and consecrated to two lords].)

These are, as some infamous bawd, or whore  
Should praise a matron. What could hurt her more?  
(So much for the two actors who were represented in praising you in the prefatory letter and calling you friend and fellow. Nothing could hurt you more than having them do so. [If Heminge and Condell really were the editors of the Folio, and let it stand that they were comparable to streetwalkers, they were unlike any editors I have known]).

But thou art proof against them, and indeed  
Above th'ill fortune of them, or the need.  
(But you are proof against the two, who had complained of the "ill fortune" they were fallen upon in undertaking a rash enterprise when they were fearful of its success and had spoken of the "pain" that had been theirs in the necessity they were under to collect and publish the plays. You are above them.)

A more logical interpretation of Jonson's lines may be possible, showing the foregoing to be in error. I have, however, not seen one, or indeed any other explanation at all of his meaning, and unless one is forthcoming I think we must conclude that Jonson has characterized the testimony offered over the names of Heminge and Condell as originating in malice and intended to ruin his beloved, the author, and to mislead the reader.

Let us pause here and think about what we are being told. Why should anyone, it is surely fair to ask, seek maliciously to ruin Shakspeare of Stratford, seven years after his death? And who? And how would praise by two supposed fellow actors hurt him? The orthodox critics, seeming not to have read the lines that give rise to these questions, do not recognize that any questions are raised requiring answers. Even after I had called attention to Jonson's revealing utterances in *Harvard Magazine*, Professors Evans and Levin in their ostensible reply to the article would have none of it. They passed the subject by in silence. Thus, even if the Stratfordians close their eyes to the plain import, we see Jonson in the opening lines of his poem dismissing as ignorant and malicious what has come before - that is, the treatment of the author in the prefatory address: those were not the ways *he* meant unto Shakespeare's praise. Let me, he says, having *myself* undertaken to work no mischief on your name (Shakespeare), make a new start:

I, therefore, will begin . . .

I cannot help being thrilled by what follows, in which nothing more will be heard of the plays as "trifles" of which a "humble offer" must be made, nothing more of their fate depending on "your purses" no, by God!

I, therefore, will begin, Soul of the age!  
The applause! delight the wonder of our stage!  
My *Shakespeare*, rise . . .

\*Verbatim extract from Heminge and Condell letters. .

Apparently, it took an Oxfordian to suggest that you, and those like you, should not "conveniently overlook" the opening verses of Jonson's eulogy which you consider a major part of the bedrock proof of the Stratfordian attribution. It is possible, therefore, that you have overlooked, or are not aware of, other like evidence which, in part, probably caused James Boswell the younger to observe "there is something fishy" about the First Folio around the time he brought out the Variorum edition of *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (1841):

§ Heminge and Condell wrote in their prefatory letter *To the Great Variety of Readers* - these plays "are now offered to your view cured and perfect of their limbs, and all the rest absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them" - this supplements the claim made on the title page, "Published according to the True Original Copies." All Shakespearean scholars, both Stratfordian and anti-Stratfordian, recognize that the plays in the Folio were patently not published "according to the True Original Copies" or "as he conceived them," e.g., the distinguished biographer Sir Sidney Lee wrote, "the First Folio text was derivable from three distinct sources; firstly the finished playhouse transcripts, or 'prompt copies'; secondly, the less complete transcripts in private hands; and thirdly, the quartos."

§ The famous and standard Droeshout portrait of "William Shakespeare" is the frontispiece of the Folio, about which two eminent authorities in their respective disciplines made the following observations:

The London *Observer* (2/18/64) recalled that Lord Brain, head of the Royal College of Physicians, commented in 1945 that the Droeshout engraving has given the subject two right eyes since the outside corner of the eye on our right should manifestly be the inside corner.

*Gentlemen's Tailor* (1911) reported that the subject's tunic "is so strangaly illustrated that the right-hand side of the forepart is obviously the left-hand side of the back-part and so gives a harlequin appearance to the figure which it is not unnatural to suppose was intentional, and done with *express object and purpose*" (emphasis added).

Morse Johnson

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#### THE MAN WHO WAS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

This new book by Dr. Peter Sammartino, Chancellor of Fairleigh Dickinson University, will be published in December. While the book does not break any new ground, It summarizes briefly the available scholarship on the Earl of Oxford as the author of the works of "William Shakespeare." It will be priced at \$14.95 and is available postpaid from the Publisher, Cornwall Books, 440 Forsgate Drive, Cranbury, New Jersey 08512.

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## NEWS ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM GARY GOLDSTEIN

An Op-Ed piece I wrote on the Shakespeare Authorship Issue appeared in the July 22nd issue of The Stamford Advocate in Connecticut. It coincided with the run of John Nassivera's play, "All the Queen's Men," appearing at the Westport Country Playhouse, July 17 through 29.

Nassivera's play ran in Alquonquit, Maine for one week (July 10-16), Westport, Connecticut for two weeks (July 17-29) and Dennis, Cape Cod for one week (July 31-August 5). Reviews were mixed, but audiences took to the play much more than did the critics, who reacted severely to the proposition that Oxford wrote Shakespeare. Most receptive was Cape Cod, where every performance was sold out and all six critics which reviewed the play gave it favorable notices. The Boston Globe and Boston Herald, and The New York Times, panned the play. Nassivera is currently negotiating with large regional theaters for productions next spring. Most promising appears to be the Pasadena Playhouse in California.

Warren Hope, an Oxfordian residing at Havertown, Pennsylvania has signed a contract with McFarland Publishing Company in North Carolina, an academic press, to write a detailed book on the Shakespeare Authorship question, from its inception in the late 18th Century to the current time. Publication is for spring 1992. Hope, a business executive and former editor of the SOS newsletter, also earned a PhD from Temple University in literature.

WGBH-TV in Boston informs me that the Oxford documentary which aired on April 17, The Shakespeare Mystery, attracted three-and-a-half million viewers and was the most popular program in the Frontline series last spring. The station plans on rerunning the documentary at the beginning of their season in 1990, probably in January or February.

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### "FLUELLEN," "ROSENCRANTZ," "GUILDENSTERN" "HORATIO" AND "FRANCISCO"

By  
Morse Johnson

In his commentary, in the Fall 1988 Newsletter, of a book review in the N.Y. Times of Russell Fraser's *Young Shakespeare*, Tom Goff reports that Fraser asserts, as evidence of Will. Shakspeare's authorship, that the names in two of Shakespeare's plays - "Bardolph" and "Fluellen" - were borrowed from two people in Snitterfield, a town near Stratford in which Shakspeare's father was born. Mr. Goff then writes:

Well, one Lord Bardolph is the second of two "Bardolphs" in *Henry IV, Part Two*, and he is historical: so whose name rubbed off on which character? And "Fluellen" was undoubtedly chosen by the writer of *Henry V* as a common enough name for the portrayal of a comic-heroic Welsh soldier, since "Fluellen" is as likely to be Welsh as "Murphy" is likely to be Irish. (The real-life prototype for Fluellen, though, was Sir Roger Williams - Lord Oxford's retainer, as scholar Ruth Loyd Miller points out.)

The Sir Roger Williams - "Fluellen" parallel has also been identified by other Shakespearean scholars. Recently, however, I ran across a corroboration thereof by a renowned historian who probably was not aware of the documentary evidence of the close association between the Earl of Oxford and Sir Roger Williams. Garret Mattingly in his highly acclaimed *The Armada* wrote:

Sir Roger Williams ... was a Welshman (and) a man so like Captain Fluellen in his level head and glazing temper, forthright tongue and indomitable heart, even in the quirks of military pedantry that adorned his speech, that one *must* believe that Williams Shakespeare knew him personally or drew heavily on the reminiscences of someone who did ... [H]e wrote ... to Leicester ... in Captain Fluellen's own tone, "You must consider that no wars may be made without danger. What you mean to do, we beseech you to do with expedition." (emphasis added)

In that same Newsletter, Russel Pope, in writing about Roger Manners, Earl of Rutland, a close friend of Oxford's, reported:

The Earl of Rutland was a student at the University of Padua, where two of his classmates were a *Rosencrantz* and *Guildestern*.

Following his above commentary, moreover, Mr. Goff observed:

But two can play at the name game. When Oxford, writing under the pen name "William Shakespeare," needed to establish the sentries in *Hamlet's* opening as credible witnesses to the appearance of a ghost, he gave two of them the names of England's finest soldiers: the Earl's cousins Horace Vere ("Horatio") and Francis Vere ("Francisco") both had European reputations for leadership against the armies of Spain. Why Shakspeare would have bothered about such subtleties, again we are not told.

These representative examples illustrate the sensible premise and perceptive observation of a famous scholar:

All writers write out of their own personal experience and of the world they know. William Shakespeare is no exception to this role, in fact he is the greatest example of it - and the most obvious, though few people are aware of it.\*

Believe it or not, this scholar is the bombastic Stratfordian A. L. Rowse, who thereby unintentionally confirmed the case for Oxford.

\**Shakespeare's Self-Portrait* (University Press of America 1985)

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1989 ANNUAL MEETING OCT. 20-22

New Orleans Hilton Airport & Convention Center, 901 Airline Highway, Kenner, Louisiana 70062 - Per Night: Single (\$79.00) - Double (\$91.00). Meeting will be held in conjunction with the 9th Annual Jefferson Parish Performing Arts Center Festival.

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| October 20  | 8:00 PM              | — | Festival Coronation Banquet - \$40.00<br>Black tie or Renaissance Costume requested. |
| October 21  | 8:00 AM to 10:30 PM  | — | Annual Meeting of Members  |
|   | 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM | — | Scholars' morning program  |
|   | 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM   | — | Lunch in private room - \$11.00<br>Joseph Sobran, speaker                            |
|   | 3:00 PM              | — | Board of Trustees' Meeting   |
| Renaissance Festival open until 7:30 PM at Lafrenere Park.<br>Bus from and to hotel and complimentary tickets provided Members. |                      |   |  |
| October 22  | 7:30 AM to 8:45 AM   | — | Get acquainted breakfast - \$6.50  |
|   | 9:00 AM to 12:00 AM  | — | School Teachers' Shakespeare Seminar   |

Registration fee \$25.00 - payable on or before October 21.

Optional: Banquet \$40.00 and/or lunch \$11.00 and/or breakfast \$8.50 - must be received by October 5.

Mail to: Shakespeare Oxford Society, c/o Dr. L.M. Blatt, 200 West Esplanade Ave., Suite #301, Kenner, La. 70065-2473

(Complete information and program will be sent to all Members under separate cover)

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JOIN SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY AND RECEIVE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to document and establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the universally recognized author of the works of William Shakespeare. Each Newsletter carries articles which impart a wide range of corroborating information and commentary.

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1. Dues and requests for membership information to: Victor Crichton 207 W. 106th St., Apt. 10-D, New York, N.Y. 10025
2. Submit materials for publication in the Newsletter to: Morse Johnson, Editor, Suite 819, 105 West 4th St., Cincinnati, OH 45202.

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Morse Johnson, Editor

105 West 4th Street, Suite #819, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

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### SHAKESPEARE'S THE WINTER'S TALE

Directed by EDWARD VAN AELSTYN

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Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, aka William Shakespeare

This production is made possible in part by grants from  
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England has seen, (e.g.), the seventeenth Earl had shone at the court of Elizabeth, and had won for himself an honourable place among the early masters of English poetry.

In his *The Poems of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford* (1980) Stephen W. May called de Vere,

...a nobleman with extraordinary intellectual interest (and) [t]he range of his patronage is as remarkable as is its substance (shown by) the thirty-three works dedicated to him.

Charles Wisner Barrell observed in *The Saturday Review of Literature* (5/1/37):

...Dr. A. B. Grosart, one of the great pioneers in Elizabethan research, commented in 1872 on the force and beauty of Lord Oxford's early verse and lamented their seemingly unfulfilled promise in these words: "An unlifted shadow lies across his memory."

In 1578 the poet Gabriel Harvey addressed de Vere before the Queen:

Thy merit...is a wonder which reaches as far as the heavenly orbs...Phoebus Apollo has cultivated thy mind in the arts...witness how greatly thou does excel in letters...thou has drunk deep draughts not only of the Muses of France and Italy, but has learned the manners of many men...and the arts of foreign countries...neither in France, Italy nor Germany are any such cultivated and polished men.

Edmund Spenser wrote in a sonnet to de Vere in a preliminary to *The Faerie Queene* (1596):

the love thou does bear

To th' Heliconian Imps [the Muses] and they to thee.

They unto thee, and thou to them most dear.

One of the odes in John Soowthern's *Pandora* (1584) paid a tribute to de Vere:

...it pleases me to say too,

(with a loving i protest true)

That in England we cannot see,

Any thing like Devere, but he,

Only himself he must resemble.

Virtues so much in him assemble.

...I shall never sing

A man so honoured as thee,

And both of the Muses and (of) me.

James I in a 1604 letter to Robert Cecil, reporting that Lord Sheffield did not think the pension of 1000 pounds was adequate, wrote:

...as I already told him, never greater gift of that nature was given in England. Great Oxford...got no more of the late Queen.

The scholar and translator Arthur Golding in 1564 dedicated one of his translations to de Vere (then 14 years old):

It is not unknown to others, and I have had experience thereof myself, how earnest your honour has naturally grafted in you to read, peruse and communicate with others as well as the histories of ancient time, and things done long ago, as also the present estate of things in our day, and that not without a pregnancy of wit and ripeness of understanding.

George Puttenham in his *The Arts of English Poesie* (1589) disclosed that,

...many noble Gentlemen...have written commendably (but) suffered it to be published without their own names (and) written excellently well as it would appear if their deing could be found out and made public with the rest, of which number is first...Edward Earl of Oxford.

Thomas B. Macaulay wrote in his *Miscellaneous Writings* (1860) that the death of Aubrey de Vere, the last of the Earls of Oxford,

...closed the longest and most illustrious line of nobles that England has seen, (e.g.), the seventeenth Earl had shone at the court of Elizabeth, and had won for himself an honourable place among the early masters of English poetry.

## SHAKESPEARE'S MISSING MANUSCRIPTS:

### SEQUEL

By

John Louther

"Is there any possibility," Charlton Ogburn wrote in 1972, "that manuscripts of Shakespeare have survived?"

Seventeen years later, that question takes on an interesting new dimension. Were the Shakespeare holograph papers cached in a Polygon-based polyhedron with triangular faces rising to a common point, a pyramid? If so, have it and the manuscripts endured time, the elements, purposed destruction?

This is one of the two later developments that play a part in the advocacy of the 17th Earl of Oxford in the Shakespeare authorship controversy. The first offers a new angle from which to judge the motivated symbolism of pyramid imagery offered by two poets of the era, Henry Peacham and John Milton; and the second stresses the definition of an old but valid word -- "moniment." As it appears in contemporary eulogies to Shakespeare, does it mean something far more significant and revealing than the monument in the Stratford Trinity Church?

Long before the first public appearance of his inquiries and commentaries, Mr. Ogburn's convictions about the vanished holographs had, not surprisingly, stirred up vigorous opposition from the high priests of Shakespeare idolatry. Would rabid fairly describe A. L. Rowse's performance in the *The Shakespeare Mystery* television documentary (PBS and BBC) when he delivered a blast against the heretics favoring Oxford? Does he fear to acknowledge that less famous but fair-minded numbers of Stratfordians are very uncomfortable with the tainted objectivity resulting from the their hierarchy's commercial and/or academic-career insularism?

The autograph papers are pivotal to the authorship problem, and their recovery isn't inconceivable. Charlton Ogburn has consistently publicized the issue in (among other publications and media forms) the June '72 *Harper's Magazine* article, "Shakespeare's Missing Manuscripts," and more comprehensively later in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality* (pp. 788 ff., Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1984). Quoting Professor Hugh R. Trevor-Roper's line that the missing manuscripts have been the objects of the "greatest battery of organized research (centering on the works of) a single person," Charlton sums up the extant, generally accepted autograph legacy of the Bard as nothing more than "six very awkwardly executed signatures."

The routine Stratfordian argument against the survival of the autograph papers is that the manuscripts were destroyed early on. "A common practice," the British would say. Such papers, explained Louis B. Wright, former Folger Shakespeare Library Director, were "rubbish" to be tossed out on the completion of a printing job. Charlton Ogburn's reply: "Neat as it is, (the explanation) hardly stands up," continuing:

The first known reference to Shakespeare as a dramatist, where he was described as best among the English for both tragedy and comedy, compared him with Plautus and Seneca. Shakespeare's contemporaries published a collection of his plays (The First Folio of 1623) and bought up the entire printing of a thousand copies...Shakespeare was the only dramatist they so honored. In a poem at the front of the volume, Ben Jonson called up the greatest writers of other times and places to witness Shakespeare's dramatic genius and cried, "Triumph, my Britaine...!" Shakespeare's dramas were assuredly regarded as literature by his contemporaries; the Elizabethans were not fools.

Wright's...assertion also falls afoul of the facts. The manuscripts of most, if not all, of Shakespeare's plays never reached the printer. The editors of the First Folio refer to previous editions of the plays -- the quartos, in which 16 of the plays had been printed -- as "mimed, and deformed" by the "imposters" who published them. But the First Folio, in which 20 of the 36 plays were printed for the first time, was itself a melange of errors. "The text alike of the First Folio and the quartos," the preface to the Oxford edition of Shakespeare tells us, "was doubtless supplied by playhouse copies which often embodied the ill-conditioned interpolations and alterations of actors and theatrical managers."

Mr. Ogburn's *Harper's* article observes that fitting these explanations into the orthodoxy's belief-structure means acceptance of such assertions as those made by Yale scholar Charles Tyler Prouty and

Anthony Burgess. In the Yale facsimile of the First Folio, Prouty holds there is "no reason to believe that he (Shakespeare) or anyone else was interested in preserving definitive texts of the plays he had written." British author Burgess' opinion being that the author "didn't much care" about the fate of the plays.

Doesn't wash, replies Charlton Ogburn. His answer in "The Missing Manuscripts":

The alternative to the untenable orthodox view is that the manuscripts were a "hot" property and not to be shown, even to a printer. Presumably this was because of the light they would throw on the authorship; no other reason suggests itself. The safest thing, of course, would have been for those who held them to destroy them. Perhaps they were destroyed. But could any person likely to have acquired them -- and the evidence of the preface to a 1609 edition of *Troilus and Cressida* is that they were held by certain "grand possessors" from whom it would require a "new English Inquisition" to spring them -- have brought himself to destroy them, knowing no other authentic texts existed? It is hard to believe. But to hide them so that they would never be found would be tantamount to destroying them. So what to do? Could they be disposed of so that they would not be found until the existing authorities had passed from the scene? If my theory holds, that is what was done, and with consummate shrewdness.

During the closing hour of the Thirteenth Annual Shakespeare Oxford Society Conference in New Orleans, Sunday, October 22nd, Paul Nelson, retired M.D., Oxfordian, generously offered me a copy of his paper comprising his analyses of the oddly haunting intimations mazed in the book that is Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britannia*. (Dr. Nelson's treatise adds to the intriguing findings and interpretations of the Peacham work by Eva Turner Clark and others.)

The 1612 book -- complete title: *MINERVA BRITANNA OR A GARDEN OF HEROICAL Devises, furnished, and adomed with Emblemes and Impresa's of sundry natures, Newly devised, moralized, and published* -- is dedicated to Prince Henry. Unfortunately for Henry Peacham's hope of obtaining preferment at the Court of King James, Prince Henry departed this mortal coil shortly after the volume was published.

As Peacham's title proclaims, his book concentrates on English emblems (pictures accompanied by verses, each containing a definite moral), slyly created to take advantage of the author = artist's passion for riddles, enigmas, anagrams.

A proscenium arch setting is pictured on its title page, with a curtain drawn back enough to allow the view only of the right hand and arm of an otherwise unseen person, evidently a dramatic author. The hand writes, with quill pen, an inscription in Latin, upside-down for the onlooker, rightside up for the curtained author. The hidden writer's words are MENTE.VIDE BORI (By the mind shall I be seen). Not unusual coming from an era when mysterious and secretive literary games were highly popular, the upside-down inscription invites the search for hidden meaning.

Try the anagram, TIBI NOM. DE VERE, which means that the self, or true, name of the unseen dramatic author is de Vere, the family name of the 17th Earl of Oxford. Presence of the anagram on *MINERVA BRITANNA'S* title page frequently has been dismissed on grounds of isolated coincidence, key refrain in the "Battle Hymn of the Stratfordians."

Flipping to various pages in his treatise, Dr. Nelson explained to S.O.S. President Betty Sears and me what he accepted as the most tenable explanations of the symbols represented in Peacham's engravings and verses.

When we came to the page containing the verse and accompanying engraving of Figure 7, the prominence of the pyramid in the picture caught my eye. Paul Nelson said, "It's a major component of the verse, too."

A LADIE faire, who with Malestique grace,  
Supportes a huge, and stately Pyramis.  
(Such as th'old Monarches long agoe did place, By NILUS bankes, to keepe their memories;)  
Whose brow (with all the orient Pearles beset,) Begirte's a rich and pretious Coronet.  
Shee Glorie is of Princes, as I find  
Describ'd in Moneies, and in Meddailes old;  
Those Gemmes are glorious proiectes of the mind,  
Adoming more their Roiall heades, then Gold.

Dr. Nelson located his description of the picture, which reads:

Peacham's emblem depicts a "ladie faire," weering a coronet" and clothed in a majestic robe, standing beside a tall *Pyramis*, or pyramid, which she supports with her arm. [The arm and hand could also be characterized as protectively, pointedly *clasping* the pyramid, which is of her height.] Her right hand is placed over her heart. In the background on the left is a castle, possibly Castle Hedingham, Oxford's birthplace. On the right, behind the shattered trunk of a newly fallen tree [symbolizing the death of Oxford?], is a smaller building, perhaps King's Place in Hackney, Oxford's last residence...The poem makes it clear that the *Pyramis* is to be a lasting monument to one whose "glorious proiectes of the mind" crown his head more royally than gold.

Dr. Nelson's text also describes, in an earlier paragraph, the emblem as one

dedicated to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, *Gloria Principum*, meaning "foremost in fame." In 1612 Peacham of course could not foresee that Lord Pembroke would become one of the "Incomparable Paire of Brethren" to whom Shakespeare's First Folio would be dedicated in 1623, but no doubt he was aware of Pembroke's literary interests...

Mrs. Sears agreed with me that the pyramid simply had to have some kind of potent implication, given Henry Peacham's love of seemingly rhetorical, multi-meaning language.

Thus began the process of grubbing through memory and record in search of a vaguely recalled, strange nexus of "Shakespeare" to pyramid-pyramid metonymy, analogy, metaphor.

Within hours of my return home from the New Orleans meeting, the reference popped up -- creator's identity, where it is, what it says:

What neede my *Shakespeare* for his honcur'd bones,  
The labour of an Age, in piled stones  
Or that has hallow'd Reliques should be hid  
Under a starr-y-pointing Pyramid?

The first four lines of *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramaticke Poet, W. Shakespeare*, by John Milton, probably written in 1630, seven years after the publishing of the First Folio and 18 years subsequent to *Minerva Britannia's* appearance in print.

Oxford and Milton, Cambridge men with lifetimes not simultaneous but coeval, both greet poets. Was there a secret, fraternal tradition among Cambridge *literati* about the true identity of "Shakespeare" - extending to a mutual vigilance of the contemporary asylum for the corpus?

The concluding line of Peacham's two-stanza verse for his "ladie faire" engraving: "Is of their fame, some lasting Monument."

The verse's terminal word, "moniment"!

There again, the peculiar spelling, presumably of monument. About those two words, here's what Ruth Loyd Miller presented to the Thirteenth Annual S.O.S. Conference:

In his poem [Leonard] Digges uses the word moniment, spelled with an "i" -- not monUment. Monument denotes a "body of writing," as distinguished from monUment with an "u" denoting a structure or edifice.

In his ode to "The Author," Ben Jonson also uses the "i":

...I will not lodge thee by  
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye  
A little further, to make thee a roome:  
Thou art a *Moniment*, without a tombe.  
(italics supplied)

Mrs. Miller's inferences include: "Digges and Jonson were well tutored Latinists. If they used 'moniment' then we can be sure the 'i' was intentional to distinguish monImont from monUment."

Add the name of another Cambridge man, Henry Peacham, to make at least a trio of "Shakespeare"-era writer-poets who found reason to employ "moniment" In certain of their works, two of the authors *happening* to eulogize "Shakespeare" with the unusual word in the same deceptive context. True, they salute the man, but they do so by praising him through his works, his "body of writing."

Explaining moniment's (apparent) misspelling by Peacham, Digges and Jonson as simply freewheeling examples of the age's eccentric orthography is invalidated by Ruth Loyd Miller's research. Equally invalid is the claim that coincidence accounts for the pyramid trope of similar context in eulogies to "Shekespeare" by three recognized contemporary poets.

Book Review of HORSES IN SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND By Anthony Dent  
(170 pp London, J.A. Allen)

By  
Isabel and Constance Holden

This handsome book, well-illustrated with prints and paintings from British and continental collections, is a valuable contribution to the historical background of Shakespearean literature. In it one finds the information and language about the horse which Dent says were common knowledge to all Englishmen of the 16th century.

In sixteen information-packed chapters Dent takes the horse from breeding to the knackers (the horsemeat man), with revealing facts such as the rarity of wheeled vehicles, the frightful condition of roads, the lack of signposts, the costs and importance of maintaining a horse in good health, and the fact that in Warwickshire, as opposed to Essex and East Anglia, oxen were commonly used instead of horses.

Dent writes with the authority of a highly qualified horseman on the different kinds of breeding and training, and he is a thorough researcher with a style refreshingly unlike that of a dry and pedantic academician. His synopsis of *Venus and Adonis* has a contemporary rollicking appeal that the Bard would surely enjoy.

It is evident that Dent has examined every hoofprint in Shakespeare and knows the horse it belongs to, who was riding it, and on what kind of horseloaf it had been baited. Dent provides chapters on the mystique of stallions, on display, hunting, war, and travel, and describes at great length the many uses to which horses are put in the plays. Along with the great variety of people that Stratfordians claim to have provided Shaxpere with helpful information, he also seems to have rubbed shoulders with an awful lots of horses.

But as with so many books on Shakespeare, one finishes this one knowing a great deal about the subject at hand, but nothing about the author himself. Which brings us to the 17th Earl of Oxford.

In what he sees as an obligatory mention of the authorship question, Dent in the opening chapter "solemnly affirms" his belief in Will. Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon as the author of the "Works," and avers that the multitude of references to horses and horsemanship in these works tends to support that belief. But if so much horse information was "comon knowledge" why couldn't a nobleman have known it?

Dent claims that a member of the nobility would have presented a different picture of the equestrian world from that which appears in the plays. He writes: "The horse was brought to my lord's door; he rode for whatever purpose was in hand that day; he came home, dismounted, and the horse was led away, not to be seen by him again until the next time he needed it."

The assumption (for which Dent offers no evidence) that a man of high birth would know nothing about the nuts and bolts of horses is strange to say the least. Country born-and-bred noblemen, dependent on the horse for everything outside the walls of their castles, would surely take a great interest in the quality and care of their valuable animals. And any well-equipped nobleman, such as the Earl of Oxford, would have been versed in falconry, hunting, and martial arts, as well as in the care of these animals.

One example contradicting Dent's assumption is supplied by E. Carlton Williams in *Bess of Hardwick* who quotes (from the Rev. Joseph Hunter's *Hallamshire*) a 1564 letter from Sir William St. Loe at court to his wife in the country:

"Trust none of your men to ride any of your houses' horses but only James Crompt or William Marchington; but neither of them without good cause.... One handfull of oats to every one of the geldings at a watering will be sufficient, so they be not laboured. You must cause someone to oversee the horsekeeper, for that he is very well leamed at loitering."

Indeed, Edward de Vere grew up at Hedingham in Essex where his father owned valuable horses, stabled right beneath the windows of the Castle. Young Edward went hunting and hawking with his father from early childhood till his father's death when Edward was 12. Furthermore, de Vere is known to have been an exceptional horseman who was notorious in the tournaments in which he competed. There are contemporary testimonials to his skill in horsemanship. In contrast, nothing whatever is known about Shaxpere of Stratford's knowledge of horses. And there is no evidence, documentary or rumored, of his

ever owning a horse.

Thus, all the uses of horses documented in the plays, while purely conjectural in the life of Shaxpere, are facts in the life of Edward de Vere. (In addition, the classical material on which the descriptions of horses in *Venus and Adonis* are based is known to have been readily available to de Vere but only hypothetically so for Shaxpere.)

One thing that puzzles Dent is why Shakespeare's works contain little reference to the common crime of horse-thieving (the "prancer-prigging lay.") To Oxfordians this is scarcely surprising, considering that the crimes of concern to the playwright were on the level of regicide, usurpation, treason, deprivation of honor and the like--concerns more expectable of a nobelman.

In an apparent attempt to buttress the image of Shakespeare as a simple fellow, Dent points out that the plays reveal little evidence of legal knowledge. He has evidently not read the works of Sir George Greenwood, who has identified extensive familiarity with legal concepts in the plays.

As in so many other books, the connections Dent tries to draw between the content of the plays and the life of Shaxpere of Stratford are all purely conjectural. If anything, this book strengthens the case for Oxford.

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### HAMLET'S ART OF FALCONRY

By  
Gary Goldstein

For nearly four hundred years, lines 378 and 379 in Act 2, Scene 2 of Hamlet has provoked a great deal of commentary and speculation. These lines follow Hamlet's cryptic remark to Guildenstern: "But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived." "In what, my dear lord?" asks Guildenstern. Hamlet responds:

I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.  
(Enter Polonius)

Hamlet's answer refers to the years 1577 through 1585, when Edward de Vere was interested intellectually and financially in the famous attempts to discover a North-west passage to China. In the second and third Frobisher voyages of 1577 and 1578, for example, de Vere invested and lost more than 3,000 pounds. In 1581, de Vere invested 500 pounds in Edward Fenton's Northwest voyage and also bought one of the vessels, the *Edward Bonaventure*, for about 1,500 pounds. Although this expedition was a failure too, in 1584 de Vere became a shareholder in a new company known as "The Colleagues of the Fellowship for the Discovery of the North West Passage," which fitted out in 1585 an expedition under Captain John Davis which sailed again into the icy North-west Passage. Edward de Vere truly was "mad" north-north-west.

While the Earl of Oxford was losing his proverbial shirt in New World explorations, the other courtiers at Elizabeth's Palace, including the Queen herself, were becoming wealthy on slightly different investments, such as Francis Drake's plunder of King Phillips treasure ships. It's obvious that de Vere was joking upon this "maddening" run of bad luck, a situation only his noble audience at Court would be aware of. When the second part of the remark is deciphered and added to the first part, however, the passage suddenly takes on a vastly greater meaning.

In his *The Birds of Shakespeare* (London 1871), James E. Harting points out:

The last word (handsaw) should be "hemshaw," the old name for a heron. It is not everyone who knows a hawk from a heron when he sees it, although it is scarcely possible to conceive two birds more unlike in appearance. On this level, the general audience would take Hamlet's statement to mean that he feigned madness when it suited his purpose; at other times he could even outwit the many, and see a distinction where they, from ignorance, would fail.

This provides us with the first clue to deciphering Hamlet's aphorism on hawks and herons. However, the message becomes clearer when combined with the following bit of information printed in the December 30, 1865 issue of *The Athenaeum* of London:

Among the ancient Egyptians, the hawks signified the Etesian, or northerly wind (which, in the beginning of the summer, drives the vapor toward the south, and which, covering Ethiopia with

dense clouds, there resolves them into rains, causing the Nile to swell), because the bird follows the direction of that wind (Job xxxix, 26). The heron, hern, or hernshaw signified the southerly wind, because it takes its flight from Ethiopia into Upper Egypt, following the course of the Nile as it retires within its banks, and living on the small worms hatched in the mud of the river.

Hence the heads of these two birds may be seen surmounting the canopi used by the ancient Egyptians to indicate the rising and falling of the Nile respectively. Now Hamlet, though feigning madness, yet claims sufficient sanity to distinguish a hawk from a hernshaw when the wind is southerly; that is, the time of the migration of the Hernshaw to the north, and when the former is not to be seen. Shakespeare may have become acquainted with the habits of these migrating birds of Egypt through a translation of Plutarch, who gives a particular account of them, published in the middle of the sixteenth century by Thomas North.

To this add the fact that the heron was frequently flown at by falconers in Elizabethan England. Hawking at herons was thought to be a "mervellous and delectable pastime," and in all the published treatises upon falconry, many pages are dedicated to this particular branch of the sport.

As a result, herons were not only protected by Act of Parliament, but penalties were incurred for taking the eggs (8d for every egg<sup>1</sup>). Moreover, no one was permitted to shoot within 600 paces of a heronry, under a penalty of 20 pounds.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, consider what John Shaw had to say about the relationship between hawks and herons in his *Speculum Mundi* (1635). In it, he tells us that,

the heron or hernshaw is a large fowla that liveth about waters, and that hath a marvelous hatred to the hawk, which hatred is duly returned. When they fight above the air, they labour both especially for this one thing -- that one may ascend and be above the other. Now, if the hawk gatteth the upper place, he overthroweth and vanquisheth the heron with a mervellous earnest flight.

We now see that, in Elizabethan times, these two birds were considered mortal enemies, and that the heron, in Egyptian mythology, fed upon *Ver* (French for worm) as it migrated north. Indeed, this mythology even held the hawk and the heron to be symbolic of opposing winds, to be, in their very nature, of diametrically opposite natural forces.

In reassessing this line in *Hamlet* with the new knowledge provided, we can see that de Vere is addressing two audiences. He is telling his noble audiences -- trained at hawking, educated in the finer points of classical literature, and fully aware of government laws -- that he and his father-in-law, William Cecil, are mortal enemies.

Oxford's second audience is Polonius; that is, Cecil himself, to whom de Vere is giving a formal and public warning: your son-in-law is *but* mad in his financial dealings, in his Northwest Passage investments. When it comes to the political arena, he knows who his mortal enemy is.

That relationship, says Hamlet, is symbolized by the heron and the hawk; when the right wind is blowing, the hawk (de Vere) will be on top; when the wrong wind is blowing, the heron (Cecil) will be able to feast upon his son-in-law, de Vere -- who will be aware that the wind, and his fortunes, have changed.

The accuracy of this interpretation can be confirmed by a close reading of the play itself, for Hamlet also has called Polonius a fishmonger, which provides an analogy with herons, birds that rely primarily upon fish for their sustenance. De Vere, on the other hand, was an Earl. According to the social mores of feudal England, only aristocrats and royals were allowed to hunt with the hawk, the noblest of birds and a born hunter.<sup>3</sup> Even though Queen Elizabeth by royal decree had metamorphosed Cecil into a Baron and then a Lord, enabling him to make full use of noble prerogatives, Edward De Vere, the oldest Earl in the land, in *Hamlet* publicly declares him to still be a fishmonger in nature. A political correspondence ratifies this charge: it was William Cecil who wrote the 1563 Act of Parliament declaring Wednesdays to be an enforced "fish day," in support of England's merchant marine.

1. See 3 and 4 Edward VI C. 7, and 25 Henry VIII.

2. 7 Jac. I c. 27

3. *The Art of Falconry*, George T. Urberville. London: 1575.



Knowing how vulnerable his position was within a social order that was undergoing rapid disintegration, Cecil never ceased to protect him and his kind. Indeed, since Elizabeth's government, for all intents and purposes, was run by William Cecil as Lord Treasurer and Principal Secretary of State, Cecil was able to protect himself and his progeny by ensuring that hunters like de Vere were unable even to molest "herons" or their eggs.

Thus, in one line, Edward de Vere fully delineated the nature of his relationship with Cecil to his friends and enemies -- his fellow nobles at Court. At the same time, he has explicitly informed and warned William Cecil that his madness is limited only to money matters; that madness hasn't dimmed his political senses, especially when it concerns his relationship with his father-in-law. He knows that Cecil has used his great office to protect himself and his kind, while trying to gain the upper hand in their lifelong struggle for supremacy.

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## THE RIVAL POET OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

By

Peter R. Moore

Introduction. I contributed a brief article to the Winter 1988 Newsletter which offered eight or nine reasons why the 2nd Earl of Essex makes a good candidate for the Rival Poet of Sonnets 78 to 86. Continued research on this theory has been fruitful and has resulted in a series of articles on the Sonnets. The first is offered here and expands on my reasons for believing that Essex was the Rival Poet. The second will show that Sonnets 78 to 100 can be dated quite firmly to events in the life of the Earl of Southampton between his return from the Azores voyage in late 1597 and his departure for Ireland in early 1599. The latter article will be largely independent of the theory that Essex was the Rival, and both articles will be independent of the Shakespeare authorship controversy. A third article will discuss implications of the first two articles with regard to the authorship controversy and will bring the Earl of Oxford into the picture (particularly with regard to some of the later Sonnets). A fourth article is contemplated which would argue that the Sonnets as published in 1609 are in the right order. This final article would partly be motivated by original material, but also by the fact that most learned commentators seem to believe that the question of the order of the Sonnets is one of subjective literary judgment. In fact, there exist a number of completely objective, nonjudgmental reasons for believing that the Sonnets are properly ordered.

The Rival Poet. *Shakespeare's Sonnets* appeared in 1609, apparently published without the author's consent, and they were probably suppressed by the authorities as they were not republished until 1640. There are 154 sonnets; the first 126 address a young aristocrat, commonly called the Fair Youth, with whom Shakespeare was infatuated (though whether the motivation was sexual is quite unclear -- I join the majority who believe it was not). The next 26 describe Shakespeare's relations with his unfaithful mistress, the Dark Lady. These sonnets were apparently written during rather than after the Fair Youth series, and so Sonnet 126 may be taken as the closing poem. Sonnets 78 to 86 concern a Rival Poet who competed with Shakespeare for the affections of the Fair Youth. Sonnets 153 and 154 are an unrelated final.

The principal questions about the Sonnets are the identities of the Fair Youth, Dark Lady, and Rival Poet, the dates of their composition, the problem of whether their 1609 order is correct, and what, if any, topical allusions are found in them. This article supports the consensus that the Fair Youth was Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, a vain and reckless young man who, following a treason conviction and two years of imprisonment, matured into a model husband, a courageous champion of Parliamentary rights, and a hard working patron and director of the Virginia colony. He was born in 1573 and died on campaign in the Netherlands in 1624. Shakespeare's only dedications (of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1594) were written to Southampton. No substantial candidate has emerged for the role of the Dark Lady. The most often proposed Rival Poets are George Chapman and Christopher Marlowe, but the arguments for them are thin; even weaker cases have been offered for virtually every other contemporary professional poet. The conventional wisdom is that the Sonnets were begun in the

early or mid 1590s and continue past the death of Queen Elizabeth and the advent of King James in 1603 (which events are referred to in Sonnet 107). This series of articles will argue that the conventional wisdom is correct. As has been indicated, I also feel that within the two subseries (Sonnets 1 to 128 and 127 to 154) the Sonnets are in the right order. And now to the Rival Poet.

Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, was the brilliant but flawed star of the late Elizabethan firmament. He was the Queen's most illustrious (though not her best) military and naval commander during the 1590s, he was her last great favorite, and he attempted to take over her government from the astute and cautious dynasty of Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley and his son Sir Robert. Desperation and mental instability led him into a botched coup that cost him his head in February 1601. He was intelligent, handsome, athletic, improvident, charming, a generous patron of writers, a commander of real talent, a confirmed womanizer, a devout Protestant who leaned toward Puritanism, a ditherer on several critical occasions, and a dangerously unstable egotist who finally lost touch with reality. He was also the best friend and hero of the youthful 3rd Earl of Southampton. He was also a poet whose talent was admired by his contemporaries.

Essex exerted a major gravitational force on his age, and he influenced William Shakespeare, who praised Essex in *Henry V*. Contemporaries also saw a resemblance, intended or not, between Essex and Bolingbroke in *Richard II*. It has plausibly been suggested that *Love's Labour's Lost* had something to do with Essex's circle, that the description of Cawdor's execution in *Macbeth* evokes the death of Essex, and that "The Phoenix and the Turtle" glorifies Essex's love for Elizabeth. Above all, Essex appears in books about Shakespeare as the hero of Southampton, Shakespeare's sole dedicatee. There are over ten good reasons for proposing Essex as the Rival of the Sonnets, and, in Ben Jonson's words, "I therefore will begin."

First, Sonnets 78 to 88 describe a man who was Shakespeare's rival for the affections of Southampton during the 1590s. The man who is known to have had Southampton's affection during that period was the heroic and charismatic Earl of Essex. Southampton attempted to serve under Essex in the Cadiz expedition of 1596, but was forbidden by the Queen; he did serve under and was knighted by Essex on the Azores expedition of 1597. Southampton sought Essex's counsel when in financial difficulties, agreed to marry Essex's penniless cousin (whom he had gotten with child) in 1598, and named his daughter after Essex's sister. During the failed Irish campaign of 1599, Essex made Southampton his General of the Horse and was furious when Queen Elizabeth vetoed his decision. In December 1599 Essex was near death with fever and wrote Southampton a moving letter of counsel.\* Southampton was Essex's right-hand man during the 1601 uprising, and they were tried and sentenced together; they kissed hands and embraced at the start of the trial, and Essex did what he could to protect Southampton. Both were adjudged to die, but Southampton was spared, though deprived of titles, estates, and liberty.

Second, Essex was rated a gifted poet by his contemporaries and was admired as a writer by Ben Jonson (who called him "noble and high") and as a critic by Gabriel Harvey. Essex's friend and sometime secretary Sir Henry Wotton wrote that it was "his common way ... to evaporate his thoughts in a Sonnet." Essex wrote poems for specific occasions rather than out of dedication to poetry; he penned his verses only for his own circle and the Queen, and very little of his poetry survives. The puzzling disappearance of the poems of Shakespeare's Rival is thus quite understandable if Essex wrote them; Rival Poems by a professional like Chapman should have survived. Essex's verse is hardly in a class with Shakespeare's, nor is it in the next class down, but it is technically accomplished, sincere, and moving. It may be protested that Essex's talent was so slender that Shakespeare could not possibly have regarded him as a rival. But this objection ignores the fact that the rivalry lay in the eyes of Southampton and not in the views of literary critics. Any poetic praise from Essex was bound to make Southampton ecstatic, given his idolization of Essex. This point is a sufficient answer to the objection, but two lesser points may be added. First, Shakespeare's Sonnets contain criticism that may not have been welcome to Southampton,

\* This letter, published in Thomas Birch's *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* holds several points of interest. Like Shakespeare's Sonnets 2 and 4, it addresses Southampton in terms of the Parable of the Talents. It also contains the following passage, which confirms that on some previous occasion Essex eulogized Southampton: "What I think of your natural gifts... to give glory to God, and to win honour to yourself ... I will not now tell you. It sufficeth, that when I was farthest of all times from dissembling, I spoke freely, and had witnesses enough."

e.g., "thou dost common grow" (Sonnet 69, line 14). Next, Southampton was quite an active young man in the 1590s: jousting, athlete, gambler, patron, womanizer, brawler, and above all, a would-be wanton who finally got his chance and distinguished himself on the Azores voyage. But Shakespeare's praise is all of passive qualities such as being fair and beautiful; his poetics may endlessly fascinate, but his subject matter is sometimes tedious. Praise of Southampton's martial prowess by the great Essex might have been more agreeable.\*

Third, the Rival is said to be "learned" (78, 7), it is implied that he knew the art of rhetoric, a major academic subject in those days (82, 10), and he had a "polished form of well-refined pen" (85, 8). Essex received his M.A. from Cambridge in his midteens, maintained a lifelong interest in intellectual matters, and surrounded himself with educated men.

Fourth and fifth, the Rival was "of tall building and of goodly pride" (80, 12), and his pride is further alluded to in Sonnet 86. Several contemporaries recorded that Essex was notably tall. His pride was inordinate even by the standards of Elizabethan nobility -- it consumed and finally destroyed him.

Sixth, Shakespeare contrasts himself to his mighty Rival with much nautical metaphor in Sonnets 80 and 86. Shakespeare is a "saucy bark" (80, 7), while the Rival is "the proudest sail" (80, 6) whose "great verse" is called "the proud full sail" (86, 1). So we may suppose that the Rival was something of a sailor. Essex distinguished himself on the Lisbon voyage of 1589, won further glory as co-commander of the 1598 Cadiz expedition, and was sole commander of the ill managed Azores venture of 1597 (he unjustly placed the blame on his Rear Admiral, Sir Walter Raleigh\*\*).

Seventh, Sonnet 88 says that the Rival has an "affable familiar ghost/Which nightly gulls him with intelligence" (11. 9-10). Seekers of the Rival Poet always take this passage as indicating occult practices and try to show that their candidates were up to such activities. The task is not difficult as almost everyone back then was more or less superstitious by modern standards, but a far more mundane explanation is available. Essex maintained his own international intelligence service as part of his rivalry with the Cecils, who commanded the official intelligence agency. It was Essex's aim to be better informed than the government and to be the first to tell the Queen of foreign events. Essex's chief of intelligence was the erudite Anthony Bacon, who had friends all over Europe, and who lived in Essex's mansion in the Strand from 1595 to 1600. Thus without conjuring up necromancers and astrologers, we find the "affable familiar ghost": an intelligence director whose greatest asset was his legion of overseas friends (hence, "affable"), and who lived as part of Essex's household (a "familiar" in the old-fashioned sense). "Ghost" is appropriate for a man who was active behind the scenes, but who suffered from so many ailments (dying in 1601) that he became a virtual recluse after moving to Essex House; he was forced to decline invitations from the Queen to present himself at Court.

Eighth, the Rival was a "spirit, by spirits taught to write" (88, 5), and had friends "Giving him aid" (86, 8). Various people are believed to have assisted Essex with his writing, including his personal secretary Henry Cuffe, an occasional poet and former professor of Greek, Anthony Bacon, who is known to have written some sonnets, and Lord Henry Howard (later Earl of Northampton), a part-time consultant of Essex's. It is perfectly possible that Essex received aid from the professional poets he patronized, including George Chapman, in which case some of the other Rival Poet theories would be part right. But there is one occasional poet who is known to have ghost written serious essays and also a masque for Essex: Anthony Bacon's brother Francis.

Ninth, we can find support for the new theory of the Bacons as The Rival Poet's Ghost Writers by considering some word play in the passage "affable familiar ghost/Which nightly gulls him with intelligence." "Ghost" and "gulls" are linked by alliteration, but also by the superstition (prevalent then and now) that gulls are inhabited by the ghosts of drowned sailors. "Gulls" is thus a bridge between the two

\* The most recent and thorough analysis of Essex's surviving poems is in "The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex," by Steven W. May, "Studies in Philology," LXXVII, Early Winter 1980, No. 5.

\*\* If the arguments offered in this article in favor of Essex as the Rival are applied one by one to Sir Walter Raleigh, it will be seen that a surprisingly strong case can be made for him as the Rival Poet. At any rate, the case for Raleigh is far superior to the arguments that have been offered in favor of Chapman, Marlowe, or any other professional poet. I mention this not to suggest Raleigh as a backup candidate behind Essex, but to underscore the dereliction of orthodox Shakespeare scholars. The courtier poets of the Elizabethan Age held high prestige, while the leading candidates for the role of Shakespeare's Fair Youth (Southampton and the Earl of Pembroke) were both courtiers. But it never occurred to the Shakespeare establishment that the Rival Poet might be a courtier.

sets of imagery, nautical and ghostly, used in Sonnet 86. But these words also harbor an appropriate Latin pun (all of the principals mentioned in this article were fluent in Latin). As any crossword puzzle fan knows, the Latin for 'familiar ghost' is 'Lar' or 'Laris', usually encountered in its plural form 'Lares': the Latin for 'ghost' or 'specter' is 'larva.' The Latin for 'gull' is 'larus'; the modern scientific name for the gull family is 'Laridae.' The Latin for 'bacon' is variously 'laridum,' 'lardum,' or 'larida.' It may be added that making puns, anagrams, and acrostics on names was a popular sport in that age.

Tenth comes the following passage on the Rival: "He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word/From thy behavior" (79, 9-10). Essex's mottoes were *Virtutis Cum Invidia* (literally 'virtue with envy' or, more loosely 'manliness draws envy') and *Basis Virtutum Constantia* ('loyalty the basis of virtue or manliness').

The remaining items of evidence concern not only the identity of the Rival, but also the question of the dates of the Rival Poet Sonnets. My hypothesis is that Sonnets 78 to 86 were written soon after Essex and Southampton returned from the Azores in late October 1597.

Eleventh, despite objections by William Shakespeare, cosmetics were used by men as well as women in the Elizabethan Age. Judging by contemporary poetry, the fashionable complexion consisted of a face as white as lilies, a touch of roses in the cheeks, and lips like rubies (teeth were usually compared to pearls). Those not blessed by nature with such an appearance could paint their faces with white lead and redden their lips and cheeks with rouge. Sonnets 82 ("And their gross painting might be better used/Where cheeks need blood; in thee it is abus'd," 11. 13-14) and 83 ("I never saw that you did painting need," 1. 1) disparagingly associate the Rival with the use of cosmetics. There are two portraits of Essex in the National Portrait Gallery in London, both believed to have been painted around 1597. In any event, they are later than August 1596, as Essex is wearing the beard grown on the *Cediz* voyage. One is a full length portrait of Essex standing in the robes of a Knight of the Garter; it is reproduced in color in *National Portrait Gallery in Colour*, edited by Richard Ormond, who dates the portrait circa 1597. The other is a head and shoulders portrait of Essex in a white satin doublet (he wears the same garment in the standing portrait), with a ruff over a transparent collar over a wide blue ribbon that suspends his St. George medal; it is reproduced in color in *The Horizon Book of the Elizabethan World*, by Lacey Baldwin Smith and bears the date 1597. During the early part of that year, Essex should have had something of a tan left over from his several months at sea during the summer of 1596. During the latter part of 1597, Essex should have been bronzed by his voyage to the Azores. However the standing portrait shows Essex with a ghastly pallor; his face has obviously been painted white, and his lips have probably been camlined as well. The head and shoulders portrait shows him with lips of a bright, artificial red, unquestionably camlined, and a face that is not quite as pallid as in the other portrait, but that is far too pale for a man who had been making summer voyages to the latitude of southern Spain.

But Essex had another link to cosmetics at that time. At the beginning of 1598 the Queen gave him all of the available stock of cochineal, partly as an outright gift and partly by selling it to him at a reduced price. She then banned any further imports of the stuff for two years; the total profit to Essex was reportedly the immense sum of 40,000 pounds. Cochineal is a bright red dye used then for textiles but also for painting the lips and cheeks. The two portraits of Essex are of around 1597, and the Elizabethan year 1597 was, by modern reckoning, April 4, 1597 to April 3, 1598, so the two portraits may show Essex wearing his own product. In short, Shakespeare simultaneously complains about the Rival Poet and face paint, while Essex used cosmetics and had a monopoly on rouge.

Twelfth is Shakespeare's assertion in the nautical Sonnet 80 (11. 3-4) that his Rival "spends all his might/...speaking of your (Southampton's) fame." Hyperbolic praise was common in Elizabethan poetry, but the first incident in Southampton's career that would reasonably justify lauding his fame was his return from the Azores in late October 1597 with a knighthood and the spoils of one of the few prizes taken on that voyage. We also know that Southampton's success was exaggerated. The prize that he looted and abandoned was quite small, but one courtier sent a friend the following information. "This morning my Lord Essex's letters came to court of his safe landing in Plymouth. He had unfortunately missed the (Spanish) King's own ships with the Indian Treasure but fell on the merchant fleet. Four of them he hath taken, and sunk many more, my Lord of Southampton fought with one of the king's great Men of War, and sunk her." So it appears that Essex was indeed puffing the fame of the Fair Youth.

Thirteenth, the theme of Sonnet 79 may be stated as follows: 'You (the Fair Youth) owe the Rival Poet no thanks for his praise, because he is simply repaying his debt to you.' A partisan of Southampton's who was resentful of Essex could very well make such an argument in the wake of the

Azores expedition, in which the value of the loot was far less than the cost of the voyage. The five prizes taken kept the expedition from being a total failure, and one of them was seized by Southampton while his ship was detached from the fleet. So Shakespeare would feel justified in telling Southampton that Essex was simply giving him his due by knighting and praising him.

Fourteenth, and rather tenuously, we may note Shakespeare's remark in the same sonnet that "my sick Muse doth give another place" (79, 4). This line may be paraphrased in two ways, either 'my sick Muse yields to another Muse,' or 'my sick Muse yields to another sick Muse.' It is impossible to be certain as to whether the pronoun "another" includes the adjective "sick" as well as the noun "Muse," but such a reference would be highly appropriate. When Essex returned from the Azores he found that the Queen blamed him for the expedition's failure and that two of his rivals at court had stolen marches on him during his absence. He responded by shutting himself up in his house for several weeks, claiming to be ill. So Shakespeare would be quite justified in implying that his Rival's Muse is sick.

Shakespeare's Sonnets describe a rival who was Southampton's friend, a poet, learned, tall, proud, probably a sailor, who had an affable familiar ghost who dealt in intelligence, who received assistance in his writing from friends whose name makes a plausible Latin pun on Bacon, who was associated with the word 'virtue' and with cosmetics, who boosted Southampton's fame while being in his debt, and who could be said to have a sick muse. This is quite a detailed portrait, and Essex matches it perfectly. My next article will flesh out the question of dates.

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*"But the play's the thing"*

Jeffrey Gantz in his column "Critical Mass" (The Boston Phoenix 8/11/89), having read Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, wrote in part:

Back in June, gentle readers...we agreed didn't we, that it's Shakespeare's plays that matter and not the identity of the person who wrote them?...

In Ogburn's England, Oxford's family, his friends, his fellow poets and playwrights, his actors, his editor and publishers, even Ben Jonson - they all know he's Shakespeare, and yet not a whisper reaches the queen.

*"Barring the Bard"*

(The Boston Phoenix 9/8/89)

To the Editor:

Although I enjoyed Jeffrey Gantz's "Critical Mass" piece on the ever present Shakespeare Problem and the Earl of Oxford (Arts, August 11), one point should be clarified. It is not the contention of the Oxford theory that Queen Elizabeth didn't know who was writing the plays. Quite the contrary. This view holds that without the knowledge and protection of Elizabeth, Shakespeare (an extremely astute political observer, whoever he was) could not have flourished...

As historian Alen Ereire observed in his recent TV series on the Spanish Armada, the manipulation or imagery is part of the art of governing and the Elizabethans displayed an uncanny mastery of that art. And it is they who have passed on our conventional understanding of their time. For example, only one official portrait of the queen was permitted and by law only tracings from it could be published. The person behind this "mask," as Ereira termed it, was an enigma to the general population.

It was also forbidden to represent a living personage on the stage. Thus the state mandated political allegory in contemporary playwriting. Those who could were expected to see through the masks, others were expected to take them at face value, the image for the reality.

We do know Elizabeth saw herself in at least one of Shakespeare's plays. On the eve of the Essex rebellion it was requested by his supporters that *Richard II* (in which a vain and effeminate monarch is dethroned) be presented by the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Later, when the keeper of the records wondered at the choice, Elizabeth exclaimed, "I am Richard II, know ye not that?"

The Oxford theory merely suggests that Shakespeare, as one of the queen's most incisive and intimate portraitists, was forced by law and political necessity to don a mask as well. Given the facts, it is

not an unreasonable notion.

In fact, part of the notion of the Oxford theory is the possibility of transforming Shakespeare, his inherent greatness intact, into an illuminating and highly amusing alternative to our current view of that legendary era.

In closing I must note that in all my years of following this unique controversy, I have found that only those who have experienced no change on the authorship question claim any change would have no effect. But how are they to know?

Chertes Boyle

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#### THE AUTHORSHIP QUESTION AS SIMILARLY VIEWED BY TWO EMINENT MEN OF LETTERS

From a letter to Morris R. Cohen (2/5/19) quoted in *Honorable Justice, The Life of Oliver Wendell Holmes* by Sheldon M. Novick (Little, Brown 1989):

"Of course my father (Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes) was by no means orthodox, but like other even lax Unitarians there were questions that he didn't like to have asked - and he always spoke of keeping his mind open on matters like spiritualism or whether Bacon wrote Shakespeare - so that when I wanted to be disagreeable, I told him he stredled in order to be able to say as to whatever might be accepted, 'Well, I have always recognized (that)' which was not (fair) on my part." (For the purpose of clarification only, the editor has inserted quotation marks and substituted the words in parentheses)

From an article in National Review (10/31/89) by Professor Sidney Hook, Chairman of the Philosophy Department of N.Y.U. for 30 years:

"... the refusal to take a stand on a disputed issue may mean nothing more than a decision to suspend judgement until more evidence is in. If I refuse to come down on one side or the other of the question of whether Lord Bacon or the Earl of Oxford wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare, or whether whoever wrote the play *Hamlet* portrayed Hamlet the character, as genuinely mad or feigning madness or Polonius as a figure of fun or as genuinely a sege, my answer is decidedly *not* political in any ordinary sense of the term. It may be that in the light of overwhelming or preponderant evidence, my continued suspension of judgment could be warrantably called unscholarly, but not political."

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#### "Right Platform for the Bard?"

(From the Letters Column, The London Times 12 Aug. 1989)

Sir: Mrs. Joanna M. Swan (August 7) questions the relevance of a history of railway stations on sale at Shakespeare's birthplace. Perhaps Shakespeare himself had some inkling of this when, in *Coriolanus*, he wrote of those who "do press among the popular throngs and puff/To win a vulgar station."

F.T. Dunn  
Rose Cottage, Charlbury, Oxfordshire

Sir: Clearly the volume purchased by Mrs. Swan is a report of the original consulted by Horelio when he made his arrangement to meet Hamlet "upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve."

Christopher R.T. Rowe  
Dulwich College, London SE21

Sir: The Bard himself provides us with some possible clues. "I pray you, remember the porter" (*Macbeth*): "Whistle then to me, As signal that thou hear'st something approach." (*Romeo & Juliet*): and the strangely poignant "What train? But few and those but mean..." (*The Winter's Tale*)

Roger Guthrie  
Capra, Allendale Rd. Hexham,  
Northumberland

Sir: "And here an engine fit for my proceeding." (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*).

E. C. B. Lee  
3 Elm Grove, Swainswick, Bath, Avon

Sir: "They have their exits and their entrances." (*As You Like It*)

H. C. B. Rogers  
209 Reading Rd., Wokingham, Berkshire

Sir: "Enter Oberon at one door with his Train, and Titania, at another with hers." (stage direction, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*).

Karen Wontner  
16 Melbourne Rd., Lanishen, Cardiff

Sir: "What! Will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?" (*Macbeth*)

Colin G. Bass  
Leighton Park School, Reading, Berkshire

Editor's Addendum:

*"While looking... for something to read in the train..."*

In his Preface *To The Mystery of "Mr. W.H."*, Colonel B. R. Ward wrote:

The following pages describe a series of Shakespeare ...discoveries...tending to show the truth of the hypothesis first put forward by Mr. J. Thomas Looney in 1920 that Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford and William Shakespeare are identical personalities ... A short personal explanation (shows) how I found myself (an Oxfordian)...

On the 13th of February, 1922, I was invited to lecture to a literary society in Gillingham, Kent, on "The Sonnet in English Literature." I went down to Gillingham by an afternoon train from Victoria and while looking at the magazines on W.H. Smith's bookstall for something to read in the train, I noticed an article in the *National Review* entitled "Shakespeare: Lord Oxford or Lord Derby?" by J. Thomas Looney. I bought the magazine and read it on my way down.

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THIRTEENTH ANNUAL SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY MEETING

Oct. 20 - 22, 1989  
New Orleans Airport Hilton & Conference Center

Oct. 20  
Festive Banquet & Ball

Oct. 21  
The Morning Literary Program

Title	Speaker
Oxford's Two Stratfords	Ruth Lloyd Miller
The Hamlet of Leslie Howard	Charles Boyle
Oxford's "Revenge": Shakespeare's Dramatic Development from Agamemnon to Hamlet	Stephanie Caruana
The Music of Edward De Vere	Elisabeth Sears

Fellowship Luncheon

Joseph Sobran  
Beware of What You Think You Know

Afternoon Literary Audio-Visual Program

Shakespeare in Italy	Richard Paul Rowe
Dating & Verification of Shakespeare's Poems & Plays Revealed by Oxford's Letters	Paul Nelson, M.D.

Election of Trustees & Officers

Elisabeth Sears, President	Victor Crichton, Membership	Gary Goldstein
Russell desCognets, V. Pres.	Morse Johnson, Newsletter Ed.	Francis Home
Charles Boyle, V. Pres.	Trudy Adkins	Paul Nelson
John Price, Secretary	Stephanie Caruana	Phillip Proulx
Irving Blatt, Treas.	Barbara Crowley	Michael Steinbach

Oct. 22

Fellowship breakfast and informal dialogue among the Members - opinions, questions and experiences.

The Shakespeare Oxford Society is indebted to Dr. Irving M. Blatt for being such a competent and tireless chairman of the Annual Meeting and to all those who helped him in designing and arranging for the scheduled activities. All the materials presented at the Literary and Audio-Visual Programs and the Fellowship Luncheon were consistently stimulating and exceptionally informative and were skillfully imparted by the participants to whom we are also indebted. Excerpts from those papers will be carried in an ensuing Newsletter. The bull session on Sunday morning was outstanding - all those who were present enthusiastically recommended that it should be a permanent part of all future Meetings.

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to document and establish Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the universally recognized author of the works of William Shakespeare. Each Newsletter carries articles which impart a wide range of corroborating information and commentary.

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Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

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