



# The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



Vol.33: no.4

"Let me study so, to know the thing I am forbid to know"

Fall 1997/Winter 1998

## Enter Ben Jonson

*Did the key player in the  
First Folio ruse rehearse his  
role in the Shakespeare,  
Oxford, Du Bartas Story?*

by James Fitzgerald

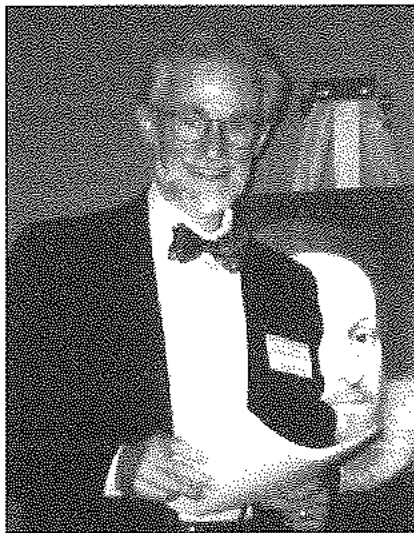
*Divine Weeks* (Bartas his Devine Weekes and Workes) was the title of the publication in 1605 of the nearly complete translation of the *Semaines*, the magnum opus of Du Bartas, the contemporary French Huguenot poet who enjoyed an enormous reputation among the Elizabethans and Jacobeans. Numerous editions would follow. "Shakespeare, Oxford and Du Bartas" (*Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Winter 1997) investigated the great significance of the Earl of Oxford's being (in identifying himself as the "voice" of Du Bartas) among the ten authors whose commendatory poems to Josuah Sylvester, Du Bartas's translator, were published at the head of the work. Susan Snyder, Sylvester's editor, records five additional poems from commendatory writers appearing in editions subsequent to the 1605. Among the latter are poems over "Ben Jonson" and "R.R.," which are examined below, and which will prove of crucial importance and interest in the matter of the Shakespeare authorship controversy. Investigation by Andrew Hannas (M.A., Purdue University) reveals that both the Ben Jonson and R.R. poems first appear in the 1611 edition.

Ben Jonson's enlistment into the coterie of Sylvester's published admirers seems more politic than esthetic. Among his English contemporaries Jonson may have been alone in publicly expressing his dissatisfaction with the poetry of Du Bartas. Like

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## 21st Annual Conference

*Gathering in Seattle rings in a new sense  
of peace and purpose in Oxfordian movement*



Professor David Richardson (Cleveland State University) teamed with Robert Barrett to present the Teachers Workshop (page 5)

The 21st Annual Conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society was an event that told us as much about the Oxfordian movement in the late twentieth-century as it told us about the latest news and research into the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon.

Coming after the tumultuous 20th Annual Conference in Minneapolis last year, regular conference attendees couldn't help but notice how the 1997 Conference was marked by an unmistakable sense of good times and camaraderie throughout the four days. Although the turnout for 1997 was somewhat lower than the previous several years, there were still over one hundred full and partial registrations, and for all events (the debate, papers, meals, performance of *Cymbeline*) the rooms were filled to near capacity.

Even the General Meeting of Members on Saturday afternoon followed this theme, with good news on our financial situation and on prospects for some exciting new plans and growth in the coming years.

At recent conferences the major events have centered around new research (Oxford's Bible), new publications (the 2nd edition of Ogburn, Richard Whalen and Joseph Sobran), or more recently how the Society itself is run. But this year it was clear that the Society may have turned the corner, and with the settlement of its legal affairs, and with the inauguration of the Hardigg Matching Fund Program, stability and new growth have become the order of the day.

In fact, even though the actual dollar amount raised this year was not as much as several of the past years (when special projects such as the Burford Tour or last

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## Morse Johnson, 1915-1997

Morse Johnson, a former trustee of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and editor of its newsletter from 1986 to 1995, died on November 5 in Cincinnati, where he was a prominent lawyer and civic leader. He was 82 years old.

A long-time Oxfordian and society member, Johnson became editor of the newsletter two years after Charlton Ogburn published *The Mystery of William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*. He produced the newsletter through the society's years of most rapid growth.

His generosity was unbounded. Besides serving as editor, he also financed the printing and distribution of the quarterly newsletter for ten years. In the early 1990s his total support of the newsletter operation made it possible for the society to devote most of its limited resources to the lecture tour of Charles Vere Lord Burford. And in his will he has left \$10,000 to the society.

A dedicated Oxfordian, he challenged the errors and misconceptions about Shakespeare's identity that he spotted in writings by the establishment professors. He kept watch on the media and was quick to send letters to editors, letters that often made it into print.

"Morse was a rarity," said Charlton Ogburn. "To a keen, inquisitive intelligence he united an ardent spirit, generous good nature and a tireless determination to advance

the cause of the truth in the matter of the Shakespeare authorship. His contribution over twenty years to the attainment of our common goal is immeasurable and continues after his death. Our world, mine in particular, is diminished by his departure."

In Cincinnati he was a dedicated supporter of the arts and was active in politics. He was founding president of the Playhouse in the Park, and for a time he was active on the theater panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. He served in a number of municipal positions. In 1972 he was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, and he once ran for Congress but lost in predominantly Republican territory.

Much of his professional life as a lawyer was spent defending civil rights. He was a member of the American Civil Liberties Union. In a case tried before the U.S. Supreme Court he not only won but was recognized by the chief justice for his courage.

He was a graduate of Cornell University and Harvard Law School. In World War II he was a much-decorated tank commander during the invasion of Europe.

Active to within a few weeks of his death, Johnson died shortly after entering an Alzheimer's center near Cincinnati. Survivors include his wife, Betty; two daughters; and a granddaughter.

RFW

## A Call For Member Involvement

One of the first acts of the new SOS Board of Trustees was to assign themselves to various committees related to operating functions within the Society. These are listed below for two important reasons: 1) so that the members can speak with or voice opinion to individuals in committees that interest them and, 2) to encourage members to become involved or participate in committees where they can contribute some skill or resource.

It may surprise some SOS members to learn that you don't have to be a Trustee to be on a committee. We need and want to encourage non-Trustee participation. Existing SOS governing committees and their chairpersons are: Legal Committee (Michael Pisapia), Merchandising Committee (Bill

Boyle), Nominating Committee (Pidge Sexton), Membership Committee (Walter Hurst), Publications Committee (Dr. Daniel Wright), Finance Committee (Randall Sherman), Outreach Committee (Katherine Chiljan).

In addition, we are looking for a Society Historian to assist in record keeping and archiving past publications, and any individuals with grants-writing experience. We are interested in grants at all levels (local, state and federal), and would be willing to explore some revenue sharing arrangements (commissionable fund-raising) with professional grants-writers.

Anyone interested in joining a committee, the archives or grants-writing please call Randall Sherman at 415-337-9171 or e-mail at: newven@best.com.

## Justice for Oxford

On November 30th C-SPAN cablecast taped coverage of a Moot Court Trial originally held on June 4, 1997 in Washington DC. No, it wasn't a reprise of the 1987 Moot Court. It was instead a Trial of Richard III, held before three Supreme Court Justices (Ginsberg, Rehnquist and Breyer) in the Supreme Court Building. The event was organized by the Lawyers' Committee for the Shakespeare Theater in Washington.

As Oxfordians know, the Richard III story has intriguing implications for the authorship debate, since the central issue is whether or not the portrait of Richard III immortalized by Shakespeare is in fact true history or political propaganda designed to make the founding of the Tudor dynasty look good at the expense of Richard III.

Shakespeare's *Richard III* has a crook-back Richard ordering the murder of the young princes, and thus "deserving" of his fate at the hands of Henry Tudor. The verdict in this Trial was unanimous—evidence was insufficient to convict Richard of having had any role in the murders.

What was (to our knowledge) not reported about this Trial was one of the concluding comments from Justice Breyer. In finding Richard not guilty (and fingering Buckingham as the most likely culprit), Breyer remarked that he *had been* used to accepting Shakespeare's version of events, until, that is, "he discovered that Shakespeare was really the Earl of Oxford."

## Authorship Games

*USA Today* reported a news item in its December 9th issue under the headline, "Solving the puzzle of Shakespeare's identity - Amateur sleuth says manuscripts are buried in grave."

The story was based on an article just published in the February 1998 issue of *Games Magazine*, a publication that has once before taken on the authorship issue (October 1994).

The current story is from Charles Young, a Las Vegas high school English teacher, who believes he has found a cryptogram pointing to "Vere" embedded in a pyramid shape within the 4 lines of doggerel over the Stratford man's grave.

We will follow up on this claim in our next issue.



*Conference (Continued from page 1)*

year's library project represented a majority of the funds) the role of these donations in 1997 as a percentage of the overall operating budget was apparent and underscored how the Society must nurture such fundraising in order to have a balanced budget each year that can support a variety of activities dedicated to advancing the authorship cause (see pages six and seven for more about fundraising and our future).

### The Debate

As has been the case in recent years, a special public event kicked off the Conference weekend. This year it was a debate between Joseph Sobran, author of *Alias Shakespeare*, and Prof. Alan H. Nelson from the University of California-Berkeley, who has been researching the authorship question and the life of Edward de Vere over the past several years for a planned biography of de Vere.

Sobran, speaking first, skillfully presented the Oxfordian case in terms similar to those used in his *Alias Shakespeare*, emphasizing the strong personal autobiographical links in the *Sonnets*, *Hamlet*, etc.

While the tactic of arguing the autobiographical nature of the works is a familiar one, Sobran's approach breathes new life into it. This was particularly true when he was able to thank Nelson for all his recent research into Oxford's life, and in particular, to thank him for finding a heretofore unknown Oxford letter (to Lord Burghley in 1595), a letter in which Oxford refers to himself as a "lame man." Upon thanking Nelson, Sobran then immediately asked Alan if he thought the author of the *Sonnets* (who twice refers to himself as lame), was, in fact, lame? Nelson never did give a direct answer to this direct question.

Sobran has also developed some good lines in making the case for Oxford. For example, he quips that, if the works of Shakespeare were to be used as "testimony" in a court of law, the supporters of "William of Stratford" (as Sobran calls him, rather than Shaksper, Stratford man, etc.) suddenly invoke his "Miranda rights." Sobran notes that when lawyers argue over whether a document should be submitted in evidence, that generally means it can help one side and hurt the other. In the case of Shake-



Debate moderator Dr. Edward Kaplan (Western Washington University) looks on as Joseph Sobran (l) debates Prof. Alan H. Nelson of UC-Berkeley (center) to start off the Conference schedule Thursday evening.

spere, what becomes clear is that Orthodoxy knows that the works *can't* help their man, in fact can only hurt him, and, further, they know the works *can* help Oxford.

"Appealing to the Shakespeare works is not a game two can play," Sobran said. "Oxford's partisans play it with gusto. William's partisans can't play it at all. Instead they play the dating game."

Nelson's debate presentation centered on his two years plus of research into Oxford's life, and numerous Elizabethan documents. He first made a number of comments on inaccuracies in Oxfordian research and in the biography of Oxford that has been developed over the years. He went on further to paint a harsh portrait of Oxford (his poetry is "dreadful," his behavior "disgusting," etc.). In short, Nelson's thesis is that Oxford was a mediocre poet and mediocre Latinist who couldn't spell, had a tin ear, owned few books, read few books, and whose contemporaries thought of him as not much more than a "minor" poet.

He responded to Sobran's points about appealing to the Shakespeare works themselves by stating that, "I have no interest in the parallels in Oxford's life and the plays." About the *Sonnets* he said that, "First the authorship of them must be proved, and [only] then are they interesting."

The second half of his presentation argued for William Shakespeare of Stratford as the author, presenting the usual

documentary evidence to back up the historic attribution, such as the *First Folio* and the monument in Stratford.

To demonstrate what Nelson considers to be the critical difference between bona fide documentary evidence versus what he considers to be the inferior, speculative evidence that Oxfordians rely on, he showed the title pages of several different Elizabethan play quartos with handwritten annotations by Sir George Buc, Master of the Revels in the early 1600s. The annotations, Nelson emphasized, clearly indicate that Buc consulted "Shakespeare" about matters related to plays and playwrights, and since it is also known that he personally knew the Earl of Oxford, one must therefore conclude (as Nelson does) that Buc knew Shakespeare and Oxford were two different people.

During the question and answer session another interesting example of what is or is not documentary evidence came up with mention of Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*. Nelson stated that *Groatsworth* is one of what he described as "puzzles in the documentary record."

"Other documents can shed light on them [the puzzles], but they can't shed light on anything else," he explained. "That's why I like to start with rock solid documents and then pick up the puzzles later."

Sobran quickly pointed out (as everyone in the audience also knew well) that *Groatsworth* with its "upstart crow" refer-

(Continued on page 4)



*Conference (Continued from page 3)*

ence is almost a holy grail, cited faithfully in virtually every standard Shakespeare biography. Nelson responded that "There are much more important documents, such as the 1594/95 reference to Shakespeare, Burbage [etc.]... In my biography of Shakespeare I'll start with 1594/95, not with his birth, not with anything else."

Exchanges such as this illustrate how difficult the whole authorship debate can sometimes be. When a Stratfordian debater can disown Greene's *Groat'sworth of Wit* (and all the mainstream speculation that goes with it), it becomes just that much clearer how definitions about "documentary evidence" can indeed be in the eye of the beholder.

### The Papers

There were eight papers presented this year, plus a number of special events such as the showing of the video interview with Charlton Ogburn, a slide show presentation by Katherine Chiljan, separate workshops for both teachers and newcomers, and for researchers, a Promotions Panel, readings from Alan Hovey's one man play *Aye, Shakespeare!*, a presentation by Mildred Sexton on *Cymbeline* just before Greenstage's production on Saturday night, and an update on research into Oxford's Geneva Bible by Roger Stritmatter.

Among this year's papers probably the most notable (and controversial) was "The Relevance of Robert Greene" by *Oxfordian* editor Stephanie Hughes. After several years of research and reading nearly everything Greene ever wrote, Hughes presented her thesis that Robert Greene may have been an earlier version of the Stratford man, that is to say not a writer himself (or perhaps not even a real individual), but rather a pen name that Oxford used for nearly twelve years, until abruptly discarding it in 1592 in order to launch the "Shake-speare" name.

Dr. Daniel Wright was impressive with his presentation on how Oxford's classical learning is mirrored throughout the Shakespeare Canon ("He Was a Scholar and a Ripe Good One..."). Wright covered much ground, and demonstrated how relatively easy it is to find rich veins of learning in Shakespeare, which in turn clearly makes the point that Shakespeare's breadth and

depth of learning, when juxtaposed with the "self-taught" Stratford man, is a problem for anyone wishing to argue for Stratfordian authorship.

Indeed, Dr. Wright made this point perfectly when he read a selection from Geoffrey Bullough's master work *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. After first reading a typical list of the many sources for just one play (with some works often available only in a foreign language), Wright then read a section in which Bullough simply marvels at how Shakespeare seems to have remembered everything he ever heard [not read], and then, at just the right moment in his writing, whatever he needed just "floats up from his unconscious."

Joseph Sobran ("Shakespeare's Lost Poems") and Alan H. Nelson ("New Light on the Historical William Shakespeare") both presented papers that complemented their respective presentations in the Thursday debate. Among some of the new light presented by Prof. Nelson was the title page to a quarto of *Edward III* which had a signature—William Shakespeare—on its verso side. *Edward III* is an apocryphal play that is now included as Shakespeare's in the new *Riverside Shakespeare*.

Mark Anderson spoke on "Strat or Strata: *Merry Wives of Windsor* as a case study in Oxfordian chronology," addressing the many layers of composition over time in the Shakespeare plays. Roger Stritmatter presented "By Every Syllable: Shakespeare's Mannerist Parable and the

Authorship of *Measure for Measure*," in which he demonstrated another level of Shakespeare's art in writing this play in which the shadowy Duke actually mirrors the shadowy true author, Edward de Vere.

Elisabeth Sears presentation on "Harts, Hounds and Hedingham" dealt with Ovid and Shakespeare, presenting hard evidence that Oxford was the translator of *The Metamorphoses*, not Golding.

Finally, Dr. Edward Spencer spoke on "Shakespeare's Sonnets: A Cry from the Tomb." Dr. Spencer presented an updating of analysis first presented by Ralph Tweedle, who believed that the *Sonnets* as first published in 1609 contain word clues and other encrypted information about their true author, Edward de Vere.

### The Speakers

Speakers this year all came from the ranks of current Society members and the Board of Trustees.

Michael York's filming schedule unfortunately forced him to cancel his Friday luncheon appearance. However, a reading of Alan Hovey's one-man play *Aye, Shakespeare!* (moved from its Saturday evening slot) was an exciting and satisfying replacement. Actor John Bogar of Greenstage performed for approximately 20 minutes and gave his audience a feel for how Oxford's story can effectively be told through this popular theatrical form.

Randall Sherman spoke at the Saturday

### Thanks to the Puget Sound Chapter

I would like to offer the Puget Sound Chapter of the SOS the highest congratulations for staging a very successful Annual Conference this past October in Seattle.

Members worked very hard in preparing a well organized event of four days that came off without a single hitch.

Special recognition needs to go to Conference Chairperson Frances Howard-Snyder, Registrar and Jack-of-all-trades Eveline Smith, Don Morris Weinberg, Robert Barrett, Marc Fleisher, and Stephanie Hughes.



*Conference Chairperson Frances Howard-Snyder (l) and Registrar Eveline Smith (r) enjoy a few moments just being in the audience.*

The Puget Sound Chapter will soon publish guidelines on running a Conference for the use of Conference committees in other cities.

Randall Sherman



Banquet on his commitment to the authorship cause and how all Oxfordians can contribute. His talk appears as a separate article on page seven.

The other two speakers this year were Christopher Dams, President of the De Vere Society, and William Boyle, *Newsletter* editor and webmaster for the Society's Internet Home Page. Dams reported on news about the De Vere Society's recent activities in England, but concluded his talk with a statement on the so-called "Prince Tudor" theory, telling his audience that the Society as an organization must be wary of going too public with the theory about Southampton's possibly being the son of Elizabeth and Oxford.

Boyle, during his talk the following day on "Oxford on the Internet," responded to Dams, noting that the Society Home Page carries virtually nothing about the theory. In concluding, he also noted that the history of the authorship movement has often been marked by controversial theories, and the Internet, for all the good it does in publicizing the authorship debate (and the Society), also magnifies such controversy. Debating controversial theories in this new "hothouse" atmosphere is inevitable, Boyle said, and we need to consider not "whether or not" to air controversies, but rather "how to air them."

### The Workshops

One of the more recent additions to the regular conference agenda has been workshops for teachers and researchers. Through the workshops basic information can be provided for newcomers to the authorship debate, and more detailed information for those who are interested in contributing to it through either teaching or through original research. This year's workshops built on the success of last year.

The workshop for researchers was conducted this year by Dr. Daniel Wright, Director of the Edward de Vere Studies Conference, and Stephanie Hughes, editor of *The Oxfordian*. Dr. Wright, Ms. Hughes, and others in attendance shared news about research efforts currently underway by Oxfordians in America and abroad. Broad participation and support for Oxfordian researchers by participants was encouraged, and a host of areas where research and

investigation to secure Lord Oxford's recognition as Shakespeare need to be conducted were suggested for and by interested parties in attendance.

The teachers workshop was presented by Robert M. Barrett (a teacher at Central Kitsap Junior High in Kitsap, WA) and Prof. David Richardson of Cleveland State University. The format followed by both Mr. Barrett and Prof. Richardson was to speak on their respective experiences teaching the authorship issue in the classroom. Since their experience ranged from junior high to college undergraduate to graduate level, there was no shortage of experience to draw on. Both presenters shared their practical assignments, readings and other resources as used in their classrooms.

### Advancing the Cause



Walter Hurst

Another interesting conference event was the Promotions Panel conducted by Walter Hurst, Katherine Chiljan and Randall Sherman. The Panel presented information and strategies to enable Oxfordians to publicize and promote the authorship issue in their local communities. All three panelists in this instance had put together the highly successful Oxford Week in San Francisco last April.

Included in this session were a number of useful handouts based on the materials that had been prepared for the Oxford Week events. This included sample press releases, letters to local media, flyers and posters advertising meetings for local chapters, and agendas for meetings.

Walter Hurst was the primary speaker and shared his thoughts and experiences from Oxford Week with attendees. There has probably never been an authorship event quite like Oxford Week, which featured a full agenda of activities including lectures, debates, interviews in both print and on radio, and play performances.

In the weeks following Oxford Week twenty-five new members from the San Francisco and Sacramento area joined the Soci-

ety, and local chapter meetings were heavily attended. One thing clearly learned during the week, Hurst said, is that there are many people out there who either already know something about the authorship debate, or who are ready to learn about it.

### Ogburn Interview

A special highlight this year was the showing of a "rough cut" from the eleven hours of videotape shot over the Labor Day Weekend of an interview with Charlton Ogburn, Jr. at his home in Beaufort, South Carolina. The interview had been arranged by Society member Lisa Wilson after many months of negotiation.

A team of five spent three full days in Beaufort working on the project: Lisa Wilson, Laura Wilson, Roger Stritmatter, Mark Ehling and Charles Hubbell.

Just before the screening a letter from Ogburn was read, thanking all those involved in the arrangements, especially interviewer Roger Stritmatter, and all those whose generous contributions made the taping possible.

It is expected that the finished videotape of the interview will be available next spring. It will be made available to members through the Blue Boar.

WBoyle

## Conference '98 in San Francisco

The 22nd Annual Conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society will be held in San Francisco next November 12th to 15th.

The Conference Headquarters will be in the Clift Hotel in the heart of downtown San Francisco's theatre district. In addition to the Clift (where room rates will be \$145 per night), arrangements will be made with several other close by, less expensive motels to accommodate some of our attendees.

The local Society chapter in San Francisco, the Horatio Society, organized the highly successful Oxford Week in the Bay Area and Sacramento last April.

Early inquiries about accommodations in the Bay Area or presentation of conference papers should be addressed to Randall Sherman at 415-337-9171 or email at: newven@best.com



## Fundraising in 1997

As 1997 draws to a close the Society finds itself in the best shape in recent memory in terms of its finances and fundraising.

The establishment of the James S. Hardigg Matching Fund Program is clearly a significant event in our recent successes. Since its establishment in September we have raised \$4,820, mostly in smaller donations. Total donations from all our members for the entire year is \$21,125.

The following list includes all those who made donations or gave gift memberships. The special fundraising for the Ogburn interview project is not included here. We will thank those members next year when the project is completed and the finished program is made available to all.

We wish to thank the following members for their generosity in 1997:

### \$10,000 or more

James S. Hardigg

### \$1,000 or more

Mildred Sexton

### \$100 or more

John Clauser  
Christopher Dams  
Russell Des Cognets  
W.A. Edson  
Barbara Flues  
Grant Gifford  
Isabel Holden  
Mary Louise Hammersmith  
Merilee D. Karr  
Kristin Linklater  
John Louthier  
Genevieve Martin  
Margaret and Norman Robson  
John Rockwell

Randall Sherman  
Lowell J. Swank  
Thomas L. Townsend  
Felix H. Vann  
Donald Morris Weinberg  
Richard Whalen  
John Hager Wulsin  
Warren W. Wyneken

### Up to \$100

Marjorie and William Allison  
John Milnes Baker  
Howard Bloch  
John K. Blossom  
Robert Boland  
Charles Boyle  
William Boyle  
Charles Burford  
Mrs. R. Walston Chubb  
Dale Coventry  
Eileen Duffin

Alfred W. Eames  
Thomas Goff  
Richard Gunn  
Ronald Griffin  
Timothy Holcomb  
Walter Hurst  
Kimberly Lewis  
James Parmentier  
G. Hammond Rever  
Elisabeth Sears  
Robert Shapiro  
Earl Showerman  
Elliott Stone  
Roger Stritmatter  
Lowell Swank  
Mrs. E. Drayton Taylor  
Elizabeth Weeks  
Peter Wilson  
Tal Wilson  
Daniel Wright  
David Zimmerman

## Why I Support Inquiry into the Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays and Poems

by James S. Hardigg

Shakespeare's plays and poems were created by a highly conscious, perceptive, and vigorous observer of life, who has excelled in all the beauty of language. While some readers are content to appreciate the beauty and artistry of Shakespeare's writings, others would be more interested in his writings if they knew that the characters were drawn from the author's direct experience.

Shakespeare's characters are chiefly people of the court. The few known facts about William Shakespeare of Stratford indicate that he had no first-hand knowledge of court personalities. For this reason, perhaps, some teachers suggest that Shakespeare of Stratford created the characters entirely from his imagination.

This theory was abroad when I was in high-school. It caused me to think of Shakespeare's characters as imaginary and not necessarily true to life. If I had been taught that the plays were written by a highly intelligent member of the court and that the characters were likely based on people known to the author, I would have looked on the plays as biography and history as well as literature, and would have had much more interest in them and learned more from them.

A similar experience was related to me by an English woman with whom I talked a few years ago. She said that when she was in what we call "high-school" and was studying Shakespeare in an English class, the teacher said, "None of you will ever write as well as Shakespeare. He had little or no education. He was a genius."

What is the meaning of the word "genius"? It is defined in the Century Dictionary as follows:

"Exalted mental power distinguished by instinctive aptitude, and independent of tuition; phenomenal capability, derived from inspiration or exaltation, for intellectual creation or expression: that constitution of mind or perfection of faculties which enables a person to excel others in mental perception, comprehension, discrimination, and expression especially in literature art and science."

This definition speaks of:

*Instinctive aptitude*, that is inherited intelligence,

*Inspiration or exaltation*. These emotions come from the unconscious psyche in response to situations and to perceptions of value and beauty.

*Perfection of faculties*. A faculty can generally be improved by education and practice.

The biographical facts definitely known about Shakespeare of Stratford do not tell us about his instinctive aptitude, or what inspired him, or how his faculties were perfected. Some of the known facts are inconsistent with his being a great writer.

It would be valuable for one to see how the ancestry, education, and life experience of the author contributed to the content and the beauty of Shakespeare's writings. Such understanding

would be possible if, on introduction to Shakespeare's writings, one were to hear—if it is true—that the 17th Earl of Oxford, the hereditary Lord High Chamberlain, wrote the plays from his intimate knowledge of people in the court.

One would then consider some of Shakespeare's characters to be portrayals of real people, by one who knew them first-hand. One would learn that the Earl was both intelligent and highly educated, having graduated from both Oxford and Cambridge by the age of sixteen. One would also learn that the Earl was a lover of Queen Elizabeth. His relationship with her and his position in the court are consistent with his motivation to write the plays and poems.

Thus students of English could be taught—both through the study of Shakespeare and the study of other great writers and subjects—that their own native talents may be developed, and that they too may make creative contributions to knowledge and literature.

Such accomplished literary artists as Henry James, Walt Whitman and Mark Twain all expressed disbelief in the Stratford story. Each of these writers had experienced an internal development in their own artistic development, and they did not see evidence of such development in the man from Stratford. If their opinions are correct, millions of people are being falsely taught.

Since I believe that truth is beneficial and untruth is harmful, I support continuing inquiry into the authorship of Shakespeare's works.



## The Cause Is In My Will

by Randall Sherman

*(The following article is adapted from the speech given by Society President Randall Sherman at the SOS Annual Meeting Banquet, October 11, 1997)*

"The cause is in my will." Julius Caesar's simple statement captures the essence of my deepest and most emotional feelings about the Shakespeare authorship question. I've never quite been able to explain this strange passion, this obsession which I know each of you probably share.

When I say, "the cause is in my will," I am not simply saying that I am interested in the authorship, or am intellectually stimulated about it. I am saying that my WILL is completely and utterly committed to convincing the world Edward de Vere wrote Shakespeare.

Does anyone here not feel the same? One thing that this year's Shakespeare Oxford Society Conference has taught me, as well as the last two years of my active involvement in promoting the authorship controversy, is that our message has immense vitality. It has energy, strength, veracity and relevance! It is the most marvelous and remarkable story I have ever experienced, and every time I communicate it to someone, I find myself very excited. And each time, I become a little better at hitting the key points, at being able more succinctly to convince my listener.

I'm going to spend a little time shortly telling you about our plans to communicate the authorship message, but first I want to relate an adage which reflects my particular personality. It concerns the value of determination and persistence. It goes like this:

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not—nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not—un-rewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not—the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The key to success has always been, and will always be, PRESS ON!"

With these words in mind, let me tell you that from my own business world experience and point of view I see the Shakespeare Oxford Society as analogous to one of the many exciting startup companies I have con-

sulted with in the Silicon Valley—we have an extraordinary story to tell, a wealth of human talent to draw from, which includes some of the most educated and engaging people I have ever met. We have the communication mechanisms (such as the Internet and celebrities) by which to promote this issue to the colleges, universities, literary and dramatic arts groups all across America. What we have lacked up until now, I believe, is a clear plan and the capital funds with which to drive a well conceived program into the mass market.

How do we do this? How do we succeed where up to now we have failed?

Oscar Wilde once wrote, "When you are young, you think that money is the most important thing in life. When you are old, you know it is." This is why one of my first objectives will be to focus on raising money. It is the fuel by which we can mobilize our considerable manpower. With capital resources we will be able to fund programs that produce real, tangible results: expanding Oxfordian publications, improving Internet communications, sponsoring Society advertising at key Shakespearean events, underwriting Oxfordian scholars, purchasing library assets, and promoting a variety of outreach efforts such as teacher education and lectures.

We obviously have more programs than we have resources for. One way to raise the funds necessary to carry them out is to increase Society membership! And increased membership not only provides more funds, it also provides more credibility for the Society, and makes more human resources available to solicit money through direct and indirect relationships.

This is an objective that everyone in this room can contribute to. Besides, it can also be a marvelous way to find out if you have discovered a kindred spirit or if someone is just politely humoring you. If people can't find it in themselves to pay the nominal membership fee, I can assure you that they won't commit to anything else. They will be "fair weather friends" when it comes to supporting this issue.

I have a specific goal of reaching a mini-

mum of one thousand members by the 1998 conference in San Francisco. One thousand members would be approximately four hundred more than current membership. To put this another way, if every current member were committed to bringing in only one additional member, our membership would double to twelve hundred. Think about it!

Allow me to illustrate the importance of this through a parable. There is the story of a pastor who tried to persuade a certain man to join a church. The man said, "Why should I join the church? I can worship in the beauty of nature by myself. I can read the Bible and say my prayers. I can follow the teachings of Christ without help of anyone else."

The two men were standing in a room. Nearby, glowing coals lay in the fireplace. The minister was silent. Then he went to the fireplace, took a tong, lifted a glowing ember from the remaining coals. Carefully, he laid it on the apron away from the other coals. Within a few minutes, as they watched, the glowing coal became a blackened ember. The man said quietly, "I see what you mean."

So, it is imperative that all members become active in the Society. This I ask and implore of everyone alike. The most expedient and practical way for people to do this is to become involved locally with other Oxfordians and to meet in groups. Such local organizing then becomes organic and local goals self-defining. But the first step begins with you taking action and committing yourself to community.

Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens once admonished Oxfordians for not being able to "put together a concise, coherent theory" of how and why Oxford came to write the plays without owning up to them, and how the subterfuge continued after his death.

The debate between Alan Nelson and Joe Sobran on Thursday perfectly illustrated this problem. To most Oxfordians, Joe gave a brilliant and insightful presentation of key and most powerful points in the Oxfordian position. In its simplest form, Joe was saying, "If it looks like a duck, sounds like a duck, and walks like a duck, it must BE a duck!" In a sense, this is a macro view from above—from 25,000 feet—much like archeologists looking from above at architectural monuments in South America and England today and clearly seeing a pattern and message that is not obvious from the ground.

Alan, on the other hand, doesn't want to

*(Continued on page 28)*



# Master F. W. D., R. I. P.

*...or how a perfectly logical answer is not necessarily the correct answer*

by John M. Rollett

Donald W. Foster's 1987 article with the title "Master W. H., R. I. P." (*PMLA* 102, pp. 42-54) is a masterpiece. No wonder it received the annual award for the best article published that year. The mysterious Dedication to the *Sonnets*, as it was generally known, but which Foster prefers to call (correctly, I am sure) an Epigraph, has for the last ten years been laid open in its full glory: a printer's error, a typo, has sent generations of commentators and scholars on a wild goose chase of epic proportions. "Mr. W. H." is, after all, "Mr. W. S." and the mystery evaporates in a puff of printer's ink!

Donald Foster's critical apparatus is formidable, and each crux is resolved by numerous extracts from contemporary literature, giving evidence of assiduous reading. The principal method might be called "the argument from the weight of parallels". If there are "x" examples of a word being used in a certain sense, and only "y" exceptions, where y is substantially less than x, then we may be reasonably confident that the word under scrutiny (in the Epigraph, as we must now learn to call it) carries the sense of the x examples, and the few y examples can be mulled over, and then safely dismissed from consideration. The logic is flawless.

Thus the word "begetter", when used in connection with a poem or other publication, nearly always means "author", with one exception (y = 1). Therefore it probably means "author" in the Epigraph, and so "Mr. W. H." is to be identified with Shakespeare, and the "H" explained away as a misprint for "S." And it so happens that there are other examples of initials being incorrectly printed in other epigraphs or dedications. Similarly, the adjective "ever-living" is almost always applied to the Almighty, "our Lord," who therefore must (with due reservations) be identified with "our ever-living poet". Sure enough, parallels abound where the Almighty is given a number of different avocations, in different contexts, and if "Poet" is not precisely to be found among them, then surely it may legitimately be added to the list.

We can now see that the Epigraph should

be understood somewhat along the following lines. "To the author of the ensuing Sonnets, Mr. W[illiam] S[hakespeare], all happiness! - together with that eternity promised by Our Ever-living Lord, wishes [Thomas Thorpe], the well-wishing adventurer in publishing [this slim quarto]." At last, the puzzle which eluded 160 or more years of determined investigation has been finally solved. This leads us into a paradox. How is it possible that such scholarship, such industry, such brilliance, such combining of sources, such plausible and judiciously argued trains of thought, should result in a conclusion which is totally, utterly, and completely — wrong?

It has been said that the devil is in the details, and so it will emerge. But first I am reminded of Niels Bohr, who once upbraided a PhD student, telling him "You are not thinking, you are just being logical." I will give three examples to show where Donald Foster has gone off the rails and why, and to show how impeccable reasoning can, on occasion, lead one straight into the wilderness.

## (1) "THE. ONLIE. BEGETTER."

The opening phrase contains a word, "begetter," which has been a stumbling block for commentators from the beginning of critical interest in the Dedication (that is to say, Epigraph). Some have thought it might mean "inspirer," and some "procurer" (of the manuscript for the publisher). Another group has speculated that it might refer to the poet's urging of the young man of the first seventeen sonnets to procreate, and beget a son of his own, just as his father had done; the reluctant "begetter" is then again the young man. But for Foster a "begetter" is, in this context, by all relevant parallel passages, the "author," as many quotations indicate, and so it is in this sense that we are to understand it in the Epigraph (and amend an "H" to an "S").

Unfortunately, Donald Foster has overlooked something. The Epigraph is ad-

dressed not to "the begetter." It is addressed to "the onlie begetter." For Foster, it might just as well read "the begetter," or "the one begetter," or "the sole begetter," or "the unique begetter," or "the singular begetter." However, to an educated Elizabethan reader the phrase "the onlie begetter" conveys a whole complex of meanings, for the simple reason that it is a quotation, or rather an adaptation, from a well-known text. In the Gospel of St. John, Chapter 1, verse 14 (Geneva version and others), occurs the phrase "onely begotten Sonne." Thus for an Elizabethan familiar with the Gospels, the phrase "onlie begetter" is irrevocably linked with the word "Sonne." Since the theme of the first seventeen sonnets is the urging of the young man to beget a son ("Your Father had a son, let your Son say so; Make thee an other selfe for love of me"), it follows inevitably that the "begetter" is to be understood as the young man, just as for 160 years the majority of commentators have supposed. And indeed, in the one exception quoted by Foster (y = 1), Daniel (in his sonnet "To the countess of Pembroke," prefaced to *Delia*), says that his verse has been "[b]egotten by thy hand." So we have a parallel, in which the dedicatee is also cast in the role of the author, having inhabited the poet's mind to such an extent as almost to have guided his pen.

## (2) "OVR. EVER-LIVING. POET."

Donald Foster has found numerous examples of the use of the compound adjective "ever-living," most of which ("x") refer to the Almighty. He is surprised not to find even one example which refers to a living person, in particular Queen Elizabeth, but has located a few which refer to attributes of a dead person, for instance Henry Vth, described by Shakespeare in *Henry VI, part 1* (IV, iii, 51-2) as "[t]hat ever-living man of memory" ("y"). Foster is not remotely to be faulted for overlooking the passage in Covell's *Polimanteia*, (ed. A. B. Grosart, 1881, p. 32), where he urges some member of the Inns of



Court to write in such a way as to "give immortalitie to an ever-living Empresse," the Queen herself. Whether this example would have affected his approach in any way is hard to guess. And the possibility, which follows logically from the smaller set of "y" examples, that "our ever-living poet" might be dead, is not mentioned, even to be ruled out (although it must surely have occurred to him). Hence the identification of "poet" with "Lord" becomes a necessity to save appearances.

Foster's interpretation of "our ever-living poet" to mean "our ever-living Lord" is flawed for another reason: the use of the possessive pronoun "our." His examples of the use of the epithet "ever-living," as applied to the Almighty, mostly employ the word "the," as in "the only and ever-living Saviour," "the ever-living Lord God," and simply "the Ever-Living"; in none of his examples is the pronoun "our" used in place of "the." But the use of "our" instead of "the" in the phrase "our ever-living poet," with "poet" standing for "Lord," suggests a rather too familiar relationship with the Maker of All Things; "Our Lord," when He looks after us, but "The Ever-Living Poet," when He is at His writing-desk. Had the Epigraph read "that eternitie promised by the ever-living poet," it might (perhaps) have carried Foster's meaning. But "our ever-living poet" rules it out. Foster's interpretation won't do.

What the writer of the Epigraph is actually saying (pace D. W. F.) is that the immortality conferred upon the dedicatee, by our ever-living poet in these insuing sonnets, is additionally wished upon him by the well-wishing adventurer T. T., as he sets into print and launches forth upon the booksellers of Paul's the aforesaid slim quarto: "Your name from hence immortal life shall have" (Sonnet 81).

### (3) "Mr. W. H."

With disarming confidence, Donald

**TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .  
THESE . INSVING . SONNETS .  
MR . W . H . ALL . HAPPINESSE .  
AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .  
PROMISED .  
BY .  
OVR . EVER-LIVING . POET .  
WISHETH .  
THE . WELL-WISHING .  
ADVENTVRER . IN .  
SETTING .  
FORTH .**

**T. T.**

*The Dedication (or... "Epigraph") to Shakespeare's Sonnets is one of the most famous enigmas in literary history. Can it really be that this enigma is nothing more than a misunderstanding or two and a typographical error?*

Foster opines that "[n]one but the party faithful" still suppose that Thomas Thorpe ("a commoner") would dare to address a Lord, such as Henry Wriothesley (Earl of Southampton) or William Herbert (Earl of Pembroke), as "Master," and therefore "Mr. W. H." can only be a commoner (eg Shakespeare, with a typo "H"), notwithstanding the fact that for well over a century commentators have taken it for granted that the notation "Mr. W. H." is designed to obscure, rather than to suggest, the status and identity of the dedicatee. Nevertheless, in several of the sonnets we get a distinct impression that the young man addressed is well-born. He is invoked or alluded to in various places as "Lord," "prince," "sovereign," "king," and elsewhere it seems that he is a man of substance and distinguished lineage. So it follows that the young man cannot be "Mr." W. H. When, we might ask

ourselves, is a lord not a lord? No great knowledge of Elizabethan history is required to furnish an answer.

In February, 1601, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, launched an ill-fated rebellion against those he believed were controlling the government of the country, and had out-manouvered him in influencing the Queen and the Council's deliberations. Within three weeks he had been beheaded, and his most devoted follower, also convicted of treason, had been attainted, deprived of his lands, stripped of his earldom, and confined to the Tower, where he signed himself "of late Southampton, but now . . . H. Wriothesley." Here, from February 1601 until the accession of James I, when he was freed and soon after (July 1603) restored to his earldom, he languished, a commoner, plain "Mr. H. W." A lord and no lord.

It might well be the case that the Epigraph was written during his incarceration and bundled up with the manuscript of the sonnets, to be later passed on to Thorpe and printed as found. The Epigraph is so different from

Thorpe's other dedications—which are exuberant, witty, full of puns, making free use of alternations between roman and italic fonts, and none of which is signed "T. T."—that it is easy to suppose that someone else wrote it, the initials "T. T." being added for the sake of form, not as an indication of authorship.

And why should someone other than Thorpe have written this mysterious Epigraph, and for what purpose? Are we meant to read between the lines? Is there a subtext? Does it contain secret information, hidden in some simple manner? Is it a cryptogram, as several commentators have suggested? Time will tell, no doubt. And then the mystery will finally have been resolved. Requiescat, Mr. W. S. Resurgat, Mr. W. H.!

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## A Monumental Problem

*Yet another enigma in the authorship debate has been the Stratford monument: Has it always been the same? Was it ever changed? Is it a real likeness?*

by Richard F. Whalen

Forty years after Will Shakspeare died, Sir William Dugdale published an engraving of the famous monument to "Shakespeare" in Stratford-on Avon. The engraving, by Wenceslaus Hollar, shows a man with a downturned moustache, arms akimbo and hands grasping a sack. The image of the deceased is quite different from that in the monument seen today in Stratford. There is no pen, no paper, no writing surface. Nothing in Hollar's engraving suggests that the man from Stratford was a writer. Oxfordians generally take Hollar's engraving as evidence that the Stratford man was not the author Shakespeare.

Understandably, the discrepancy between the engraving and today's monument has caused problems for establishment scholars. Editors of the works of Shakespeare and biographers of the man from Stratford rarely include the Hollar engraving. If they do print it, they dismiss it, even though it was the earliest published depiction of the monument with its bust of the man supposed to be the great poet/dramatist. It first appeared in Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, published in 1656.

One establishment scholar who did print the Hollar engraving was the late S. Schoenbaum. In *William Shakespeare, A Documentary Life* (1975) he says, however, that the engraving is "perplexing rather than helpful, for we reconcile it with difficulty with the familiar artefact in the chancel [of the Stratford church.]" His conclusion: "The best and simplest explanation is that the illustration misrepresents the object, in keeping with the liberty of seventeenth century engraving." He adds, parenthetically: "(A comparison of the engraving with the drawing—perhaps still extant—on which it is based might be revealing.)"

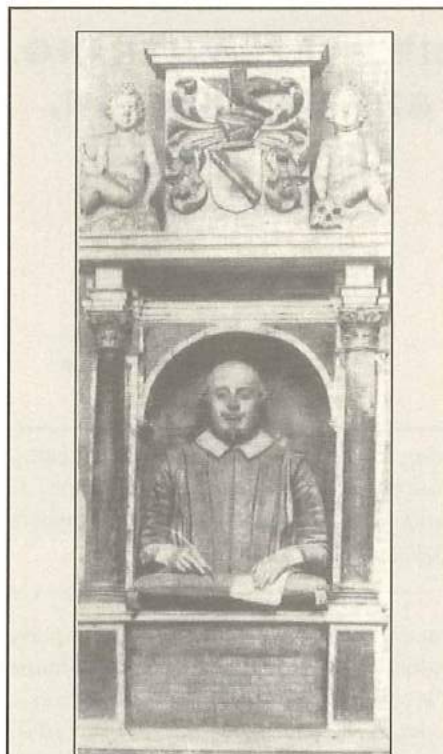
As it happens, the drawing was extant at the time Schoenbaum was writing. The anti-Stratfordian Sir George Greenwood had seen it earlier in the twentieth century. Then, in the early 1990s Gerald E. Downs of

Redondo, California—with the aid of Randy and Barbara Westerfield of Agoura, California (all three members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society)—was able to photograph the drawing, which is held by the present

might have desired. Dugdale's sketch was made during his visit to Stratford in 1634, only eighteen years after Will Shakspeare died. Dugdale was the earliest eyewitness to record the appearance of the monument for posterity. His sketch, although quite crude, shows a man with indistinct facial features, with his arms akimbo and his hands grasping what appears to be a sack (wool? grain?). Dugdale's note with the sketch refers to the man depicted as "William Shakespeare the famous poet." Yet, there is no pen, no paper and no writing surface, as there is in today's monument. For most Oxfordians, Dugdale's sketch can only reinforce the validity of Hollar's engraving, which appeared in Dugdale's own book.

Diana Price of Cleveland, an independent researcher, draws a different and provocative conclusion in the British journal *Review of English Studies* (May 1997). She concludes that Dugdale's sketch "provides convincing evidence that today's monument is the original." In her view, "Dugdale's image generally corresponds to Shakespeare's monument, yet most of the details are either inaccurate or misleading." This statement, however, is self-contradictory. Dugdale's image cannot be said to correspond to today's monument if most of the details are "inaccurate or missing." Moreover, nowhere in the article can the reader learn in what way Dugdale's sketch of the central figure does correspond to today's monument.

To support her conclusion Price finds reasons why the details are inaccurate or missing. The absence of the quill pen, she says, "presents no particular mystery." It was removable and a likely souvenir; later commentators noted that it was missing. The absence of paper "is less easily explained," but Dugdale "may simply have missed the paper." The man is grasping what Price sees as a "distorted cushion," although she calls him a "sackholder" at one point, and today's monument shows a



Courtesy, Folger Shakespeare Library

*The monument as it appears today in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon, with the cushion lying flat in front of the figure, and paper and pen clearly visible*

Sir William Dugdale in England. Downs showed a slide of it during his talk at the society's conference at Carmel, California, in 1994. Their success in obtaining a photograph of it ranks as a significant accomplishment in Shakespearean research.

Professor Schoenbaum hoped that Dugdale's drawing might prove revealing. It does, indeed, but not in a way that he





From *Review of English Studies*, photograph by Gerald Downs

*The original 1634 Dugdale sketch, not seen before by any scholars until photographed by Gerald Downs and presented at the 1994 Shakespeare Oxford Society Conference.*



Courtesy, Folger Shakespeare Library

*The Hollar engraving—based on the 1634 Dugdale sketch—that appeared in the 1656 first edition of *Antiquities of Warwickshire*.*



Courtesy, Folger Shakespeare Library

*The rendition of the monument by George Vertue (from a 1723 engraving, first published in 1725).*

cushion as a writing surface. Thus the pertinent details of Dugdale's sketch of the central figure were inaccurate, yet in some unexplained way it corresponds to today's monument. And Hollar had little on which to base his engraving.

That Hollar should omit a writer's tools that were supposedly in the original monument that Dugdale saw is an additional difficulty for Price's proposition. A prolific engraver, he was known for the "truth and realism" of his works. He supplied a portrait of Dugdale himself for the frontispiece of Dugdale's book; and V. Denkstein says in *Hollar Drawings* that although Hollar took great care with Dugdale's features he "seems to have been even more fascinated by the objects around him." The objects around Dugdale in the engraving feature books, pens, paper and a table to write upon. Hollar, he says, had "an interest in the shapes of small objects." With this interest, it seems strange that Hollar would have omitted pen, paper and writing surface in the engraving of a writer for a book published by Dugdale, who supposedly had seen the monument with the writer's tools. Hollar's engraving of the sackholder even appeared unchanged in a revised, corrected edition of Dugdale's book in 1730.

Enter George Vertue, another engraver.

Like Dugdale, he, too, visited Stratford, although about a century later; and his engraving of 1723 depicts the image of a writer, pretty much as the effigy appears today. Price gives Vertue priority over Dugdale/Hollar despite his being a late-comer and what she recognizes as questions about his artistic credibility; he pasted the so-called Chandos portrait on the face of the bust, complete with earring. (Vertue's reliability as a mapmaker has also been questioned.) Nevertheless, Price says Vertue got the monument right; it looks like today's monument. There is a bit of circular reasoning here, in that Vertue's images are considered accurate depictions of the original monument because they resemble today's monument, but that is the point in question.

Oxfordians usually offer another explanation. Given the earlier Dugdale/Hollar images of the sackholder, it is perhaps more likely that Vertue decided or was ordered to make the effigy into that of a writer, more in keeping with the Stratford man's reputation. Vertue's design might well have inspired whoever might have changed the bust. In 1748-49 the bust was "repaired" by the master of the Stratford grammar school. He mentioned a cushion and emphasized to a correspondent that he took care "not to

add to or diminish what the work consisted of, and appeared to have been when first erected....nothing has been changed, nothing altered." Skeptics might say he seems to protest too much.

Price values Dugdale's sketch so highly as evidence that she considers it "a final litmus test" to prove that the present monument is the original. No one, she says, who omits Hollar and looks at Vertue's engraving "could conclude that in 1634 Dugdale had been looking at a different monument." (Is this an instance where "Vertue" is in the eye of the beholder?)

Others may well come to a different conclusion. For them, seeing the Dugdale sketch, the earliest eyewitness evidence, can only tend to confirm the validity of the Hollar engraving of a sackholder without pen, paper or writing surface, and can only raise questions about what Vertue was up to a century later. Now that Dugdale's sketch has been published, Shakespeare scholars can decide for themselves whether the original monument that Dugdale saw and had Hollar engrave for his book was or was not the famous monument that we see today in Stratford. We can, at least, be grateful to Price, Downs and the Westerfields that the Dugdale sketch has at last been published.



Fitzgerald (Continued from page 1)

Jonson's honorific verse in the *First Folio* of 1623, his fourteen lines to Sylvester are also masterly delphic. Strongly reminiscent of the *Folio* introductory verse, Jonson's poem demands examination.

If to admire were to commend, my Praise  
Might then both thee, thy worke and merit  
raise;

But, as it is (the Child of Ignorance,  
And utter stranger to all ayre of France)  
How can I speake of thy great paynes, but  
erre:

Since they can only Judge, that can conferre?  
Behold! The reverend Shade of BARTAS  
stands

Before my thought, and (in thy right)  
commaunds

That to the world I publish for him, This;  
BARTAS doth wish thy English now were  
His.

So well in that are his Inventions wrought,  
As His will now be the Translation thought,  
Thine the *Originall*; and France shall boast  
No more those mayden glories she hath lost.

"But these wayes," Jonson declares within the first six lines of the *Folio* introduction to the apostrophized Shakespeare, "Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise." He then expounds for ten lines on the perilous ease by which one may fundamentally misconceive the nature and works of Shakespeare.

The *Folio* passage would function very adequately as the gist of Jonson's Sylvester eulogy. "My Shakespeare, rise," Jonson commands in the *Folio* eulogy, which is closely paralleled in, "Behold! The reverend shade of BARTAS / stands before my thought." Compare also in their identity of end-rhyme and professed infixity of thought these lines of the Sylvester eulogy with the following couplet from the *First Folio*:

If to admire were to commend, my  
Praise  
Might then both thee, thy worke and  
merit raise. (*Weeks*, 1-2)

Or crafty Malice, might pretend this  
praise,  
And thinke to ruine, where it seem'd  
to raise. (*Folio*, 11-12)

And it also seems that Jonson continued to hear, "But, as it is (the Child of Ignorance...)," in line 3 of the Sylvester poem when he wrote in line 70 of the *First Folio*, "As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance." Observe the metathesis in "But, as / As brandish't," and the shared long-i sounds of "Child" and "eyes." Between the Jonson encomiums of *Divine Weeks* and the *First Folio*, we observe commonality of theme in Jonson's admitted need to praise in a manner he would not have chosen freely, and echoes of conception and language.

That Ben Jonson should have been absent as a eulogist from the 1605 edition of *Divine Weeks* is not noteworthy, as he had

**"...among sixteen poems, Jonson's is one of three in which Sylvester is not actually addressed or identified by name in the body of the verse."**

avowed a philosophical distaste for the work of Du Bartas. Anne Lake Prescott reports that Jonson was "one of the few writers" not under the spell of Du Bartas, remarking that "Jonson was perverse enough to say that Du Bartas was not a poet 'but a Verser, because he wrote not Fic-

tion.'" Jonson would later withdraw such conditioned praise as he did give in the 1611 edition when he admitted that, at the time of his writing the eulogy to Sylvester, his French was not good enough for him to apprehend the inadequacy of Sylvester. Although Oxford and Jonson were at odds in their opinion of Du Bartas, they would become eventually as one—once Jonson had owned up—in their reservations concerning the translation of Josuah Sylvester.

Naturally, Jonson would have been aware of the "Shakespeare" authorship ploy of Oxford. In spite of his assertion of nonfluency in French, Jonson, as a colleague and professional confrere of Oxford, should have had good knowledge of the extent of Bartassian echo and usage in Shakespeare. An accomplished classicist, Jonson would have easily read and comprehended the underlying message of Oxford's Latin eulogy to Sylvester as the final, desperate, post mortem attempt of Oxford to maintain a personal, nominal link with the works of Shakespeare through a common link to Du Bartas, the French literary eminence of the day.

#### Why praise the translation when the original is not admired?

Perhaps seeing Oxford so reduced aroused in the breast of Ben Jonson a compound of pity and horror. Setting aside his repugnance, latterly confessed to, for Sylvester's want of art, he composed a plausible eulogy which was inserted in the subsequent 1611 edition. I say "plausible" because, among sixteen poems, Jonson's is one of three in which Sylvester is not actually addressed or identified by name in the body of the verse.

Ben Jonson, who could have instructed a Venetian in subterfuge, is just diaphanous enough. There can be no expectation for Jonson's admiring the English reprise of the second fiddler, Sylvester, when he held that the tune of the first fiddler, Du Bartas, was defective. It is of capital significance that the poet here is Ben Jonson, the future editor of the *First Folio*—and no other. When Jonson declares that the "reverend Shade of

[The Ben Jonson poem as it first appeared in the 1611 edition of *Divine Weeks*.]

#### EPIGRAM.

##### To Master Josuah Sylvester.

If to admire were to commend, my Praise  
Might then both thee, thy worke and merit raise;  
But, as it is (the Child of Ignorance,  
And utter stranger to all ayre of France)  
How can I speake of thy great paynes, but erre:  
Since they can only Judge, that can conferre?  
Behold! The reverend Shade of BARTAS stands  
Before my thought, and (in thy right) commaunds  
That to the world I publish for him, This;  
BARTAS doth wish thy English now were His.  
So well in that are his Inventions wrought,  
As His will now be the Translation thought,  
Thine the *Originall*; and France shall boast  
No more those mayden glories she hath lost.

Ben Jonson



BARTAS”—revenant like the ghost in *Hamlet*—commands (with overtones of the dying Hamlet’s charge to Horatio “to tell my story”) “That to the world I publish for him, This; / “BARTAS doth wish thy English now were His,” it is hard to swallow that the one addressed is Josuah Sylvester.

If we embrace Oxford as Shakespeare, and commit Jonson’s eulogy, (superficially to Sylvester) to the headman’s block, much falls into place. I am drawn to hypothesize that Jonson in his 1611 eulogy was moved, in spite of his recorded deep confliction of feelings toward Shakespeare, to silently apostrophize not Sylvester but Oxford, out of honor for and loyalty to his dead colleague. When it fell to Jonson twelve years later, in 1623, to compose his splendid, enigmatic encomium to Shakespeare, he returned, if this analysis has caught the truth, to the “Sylvester” eulogy for the speck of matter around which to express the nacre of the immortal *First Folio* eulogy.

Anyone suggesting that a eulogy to Sylvester ought to be understood as simply that—a eulogy to Sylvester—runs into a complication. Why would Ben Jonson, setting out to panegyricize Shakespeare—“Soule of the Age! The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!”—resort for a fresh beginning to his 12-year old disingenuous accolade to, by his lights, a second-rate translation of a second-rate original, which he didn’t mean anyway?

But if Oxford, refining the ore of Du Bartas into the golden phrases of Shakespeare, is in fact, the secret addressee of Jonson’s Sylvester poem, then the apparent dissonance of that poem’s being the

source of Jonson’s *First Folio* verse is annulled.

### R.R.’s poem

If Jonson’s poem should unsettle us as veiled praise of Oxford (who in his own eulogy made considerable sport of Sylvester’s Du Bartas), the matching late-added eulogy by R.R. (see accompanying box on this page) will astonish us as being both an attack on Oxford and a defense of Sylvester. R.R.’s poem is a work of six stanzas and thirty-six lines (there is also a Latin tag beneath the poem: *Malum patienti Lucrum*. To the patient man the apple drops as profit). The first two stanzas are conven-

*“All the mouth and teeth imagery of the third stanza [of R.R.’s poem] must be taken as a response to similar imagery in Oxford’s sham eulogy to Sylvester.”*

tional hyperbole, comparing Sylvester favorably to Chaucer, Spencer, and Samuel Daniel. But a radical change in the eulogist’s state of mind, or even an incursive distur-

bance in his emotional equilibrium, takes place between the second and third stanzas, reflected in both tone and subject matter.

“Let Gryll be Gryll,” begins the third stanza. A gryll is a cricket. The author then invites *Envie* to bore its way out of the breast which has succored it. He next assures Sylvester that the bark of Malice is worse than its bite, which cannot injure his name, JOSUA. The concluding two lines of the stanza ring a change on the most common theme among the set of eulogies, that Sylvester and Du Bartas reciprocally vivify each other.

All the mouth and teeth imagery of the third stanza must be taken as a response to similar imagery in Oxford’s sham eulogy to Sylvester. Oxford mentions the “envious mouth” of Zoilus (l. 15). He warns Sylvester about being attacked “by the biting teeth of a more impure Mouth” (ll. 22, 23). R.R. makes of Malice a dog in describing it as barking. Like Andrew Hannas, he may recognize conceivable puns in Oxford’s “cur” (l. 1), with the meanings of “why” in Latin, and “no-account dog” in English; and in “canis” (l. 17), a purely Latin pun, with the

(Continued on page 14)

[This dedicatory poem, from the 1611 edition of *Divine Weeks*, is by the heretofore unidentified “R.R.”]

### In Commendation of this worthie Worke.

Foole that I was; I thought in younger times,  
That all the Muses had their graces sowne  
In *Chaucers*, *Spencers*, and sweet *Daniels* Rimes;  
(So, good seemes best, where better is unknowne)  
While thus I dream’t, my buisie phantasie,  
Bod me awake, open mine eyes, and see

How SALUST’s English *Sun* (our SYLVESTER)  
Makes *Moone* and *Starres* to vaile; and how the *Sheaves*  
Of all his *Brethren*, bowing, doo *preferre*  
His *Fruites* before their Winter-shaken *Leaves*:  
So much (for *Matter*, and for *Manner* too)  
Hath He out-gon those that the rest out-goe:

Let *Gryll* be *Gryll*: let *Envie*’s vip’rous seed  
Gnaw-forth the brest which bred and fed the same;  
Rest safe (sound Truth from feare is ever freed);  
Malice may barke, but shall not bite thy Name:  
JOSUA thy Name with BARTAS name shall live,  
For double life you each to other give.

But, Mother *Envie*, if this *Arras* spunne  
Of golden threads be seene of *English* eyes,  
Why then (alas) our *Cob-webs* are undone:  
But She, more subtile, then religious-wise,  
Hatefull, and hated, proud, and ignorant,  
Pale, swolne as *Toade* (though customed to vaunt)

Now holds her *Peace*: but O, what *Peace* hath She  
With *Vertue*? none: Therefore, defie her frowne.  
Gainst greater force growes greater victorie:  
As *Camomile*, the more you tread it downe,  
The more it springs: *Vertue* despightfully  
Used, doth use the more to fructifie,

And so do Thou, until thy *Mausole* rare  
Do fill this World with Wonderment; and [so] that  
In *Venus* Forme no clumsy-fist may dare  
To meddle with thy Pensill and thy Plat;  
I feare [for] thy life more, till thy goale be runne,  
Then Wife [for] her Spouse, or Father feares [for] his  
Sonne.

R. R.



*Fitzgerald (Continued from page 13)*

possible meanings of “dog” and “you sing,” the latter its meaning in Oxford’s eulogy. And not to overlook the obvious, there is the density of fourteen instances of “Os,” mouth, in Oxford’s eulogy, a poem of twenty-four lines. The irony here is that the bark and bite against which R.R. warns Sylvester are Oxford’s!

The first three lines of the chaotic fourth stanza contain abstruse imagery pertaining to that which is woven (*Arras, golden threads, Cob-webs*). *Arras* can only stand for some cabal, the seeing-through of which (for surely this is the true sense of the line) will also prove the undoing of the cabalists. The eyes which must not penetrate “this *Arras* spunne of golden threads” are English eyes. It is their perception of the plot that will undo the schemers. But what is the plot? And why would R.R. muse publicly upon his misgivings concerning an undefined intrigue to which he is a party and which has hints of treason, in an age in which authority moved savagely and ruthlessly against threats to the state? What can these lines be but self-destructive madness—miraculously published—or some unfathomed device of policy?

In any case, the theme which connects all is the author’s harangue upon *Envie*; now re-imaged as Mother *Envie*. (Or does *Envie*, like Grendel, have a mother?) The attack spills into the fifth stanza. “Mother *Envie* ... Now holds her Peace; but O, what Peace hath She / With *Vertue*?” “O” calls irresistibly to mind the many O’s to be found in Oxford’s eulogy, which themselves lead back to “Oxford”; and the pun in *Vertue* on “Vere,” echoes Oxford’s surname. R.R. has come to the defense of Sylvester against Oxford’s sniping at Sylvester’s translation of Du Bartas. He sees Oxford as consumed with *Envie* at the superior rendition of Du Bartas by Sylvester. He speaks of Mother *Envie* “Now hold[ing] her Peace.” This may be an allusion to Oxford’s prior decease at the time of publication, which may also be hinted at in *Malum patienti Lucrum*. If nothing else, grimly triumphant, R.R. implies that Sylvester has, at worst, outlived Oxford.

To a contemporary reader, *Vertue* may have seemed a risky pun. It derives from the Latin *virtus*—“virtue,” in its enervated

modern English sense. The Latin form was composed of a root, *vir*, man, in the sense of he-man, and *-tus*, a suffix added to form an abstract noun. It really means manliness, the condition of being a (real) man. *Vertue*, then, would have had something of the connotation of, the quality of being (the man) *Vere*. R.R. takes liberties with *Vertue* a second time, comparing it to chamomile which, the more it is trodden down, “The more it springs.” There is some confusion of image here; but to think that R.R. should speak of *Ver[e]tue* being “despightfully Used,” is cause for a certain admiration, although he will extend the metaphor into the final stanza, where he connects it to Sylvester, the fervor of righteous retaliation

***“Why would R.R. muse publicly upon his misgivings concerning an undefined intrigue to which he is a party, and which has hints of treason...?”***

tion ever in advance of logic and artistic judgement, in this headlong poem.

Looking back to the fourth stanza, the figure of the *Gryll*, or cricket, may have been employed by R.R. to portray Oxford as a small, chirping thing, an insect, annoying, but of no consequence. The image of the “vip’rous seed” of *Envie* gnawing its way out of the body seems based in the macabre image of the corpse (of Oxford) succumbing to the corruption of the grave. R.R. is a hard critic.

Taking up in excess of two stanzas, malevolent envy in its permutations constitutes the focus of the eulogy. We saw above the connections, linguistic and thematic, subsisting between Jonson’s Sylvester eulogy and his *First Folio* panegyric to Shakespeare.

If Oxford was the concealed addressee of Ben Jonson’s eulogy to Sylvester, then, when he looked back to it to indite the *Folio* verse he remembered—or chanced to examine again, or had never forgotten—the phillipic of R.R. against Oxford, and he may therefore have been moved to begin:

To draw no envy (*Shakespeare*) on thy  
name,  
Am I thus ample to thy Booke, and Fame.

In such fashion can Jonson’s otherwise abrupt and question-begging *Folio* opening be rationalized and made consequent.

In *Alias Shakespeare*, Joseph Sobran notes a great similarity between Jonson’s *Folio* eulogy and a commendatory poem in *The Faerie Queene* over the posy “Ignoto” (“Anonymous”); the commendatory poem “sounds very much like Shakespeare,” in the opinion of Charlton Ogburn and others. “Ben Jonson paraphrases it,” remarks Sobran, “with deliberate echoes, in the opening lines of his 1623 *Folio* eulogy.... Jonson’s sixteen-line exordium is little more than a paraphrase of the rest of Ignoto’s poem.” Recognizing the fore-and-aft temporal relationship between Ignoto and Jonson, we might well find traces of the former in the latter. All the same, the proximate source must be, I would suggest, Jonson’s Sylvester eulogy. The “praise-raise” end rhyme common to the Sylvester and *Folio* eulogies, together with the “ignorance”-terminated lines in each eulogy, trumps the Ignoto source, in my view.

There is more. If Ben Jonson, that stickler for correctness, is making an exacting use of the parentheses enclosing “*Shakespeare*,” then he is providing information complementary or ancillary, as that which is parenthetical can be removed without affecting the substantial meaning of the passage. If we can remove “(*Shakespeare*)” it cannot be the name of the addressee, as that would be essential information. If Jonson had set off “*Shakespeare*” in commas, he would have signalized “*Shakespeare*” as denominating a conscious, addressed entity. But that is what Jonson, the crafty Doge of Punctilio and Punctuation, does *not* do.

In the final stanza, R.R., with two missions in mind for him, adjures Sylvester to persevere and grow stronger, like the resilient, trodden-upon chamomile. First, by doing so his literary reputation shall have grown so vast that his tomb will “fill this World with Wonderment.” And, second, he should armor himself in renown, “[so] that / In *Venus* Forme no clumsie-fist may dare / To meddle with thy Pensill and thy Plat.” The “meddling” of which R.R. speaks can only be that of one writer, the Earl of Oxford by necessary implication, in respect of all that has gone before in this eulogy,



interfering in some way with another writer, Josuah Sylvester. The expression “clumsie-fist” is susceptible of two readings. R.R. may be denigrating Oxford’s excellence as a poet (in comparison to Sylvester?). Or he may be pointing at the none-too-covert power-play betokened in the insertion of Oxford’s posturing eulogy among the genuine eulogies, the wolfish earl in disguise among the sheep. I find the latter interpretation more probable.

The meddling is “In *Venus Forme*.” As the imagery confines the conflict to the field of literature, one casts about for a way *not* to understand “*Venus*” as an allusion to the *Venus and Adonis* of Shakespeare. Joseph Sobran observes that “from 1593 to 1598, William Shakespeare was identified in print not as a playwright, but as the author of two splendid and popular poems: *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594).” In light of Sobran’s statement on the popularity of *Venus* and *Lucrece* in the 1590s, and the date of publication of *Divine Weeks*, 1605, one may interpret the salacious “*Venus* [and *Adonis*]” as continuing to serve R.R. for a contemptuous synecdoche of the man and his work. (But *which* man, Shakespeare or Oxford?) Lest we miss his point, and to drive home with bravura the import of that potent little phrase, “In *Venus Forme*,” R.R. has composed his eulogy in the *Venus and Adonis* stanza, the “*Venus Forme*,” bearding thereby the literary lion (but which lion?) in his den.

The final two lines of the poem only add puzzlement. R.R. voices the gravest concern that Sylvester, in publishing the *Divine Weeks*, has aroused an enemy of deadly capacity. Sylvester had been publishing fragments of Du Bartas since 1590; what was so different now? One must suppose that, in the view of R.R., the publication of the Oxford eulogy had rendered suddenly and personally dangerous the act of translating Du Bartas. Nevertheless, to read of the life of Josuah Sylvester in Susan Snyder’s biography is to read the story of a man struggling for most of his life to provide for a growing family on slender and fluctuating means. Sylvester had more to fear from the wolf at the door than from the wolfish earl at the door.

In all fairness, R.R.’s bitter denunciation of Oxford has merit. Oxford’s “eulogy”

was worse than hostile to Sylvester; it mocked him. R.R., doubtless a Puritan himself, would have filled with anger to see the decade and a half of industry put forth by his co-religionist, Josuah Sylvester, made to serve the purpose of a sneering, decadent, aristocrat-poet. The supreme outrage must have reposed in Oxford’s consigning to the butt of persiflage the huge accomplishment of Sylvester in translating 20,000 lines of rhyming French alexandrines into at least that many heroic couplets of English. In comparison to this, what had Oxford (as Shakespeare) to show but some comparatively exiguous and altered borrowings into his own works? To R.R., can the insertion of the Oxford eulogy have but galled as the

**“...R.R. has composed his eulogy in the *Venus and Adonis* stanza, the ‘*Venus Forme*,’ bearding thereby the literary lion (but which lion?) in his den.”**

ultimate pulling of rank, taking place at the fault line of disjunctions in religion, class, literary taste, and naked power?

Oxford had died in 1604. Thus, in compelling Oxford’s eulogy on Sylvester’s printer or even more demeaning, on Sylvester himself, if it so occurred, some agent of aristocracy or government had exercised *force majeure*, and in behalf of the birth-fortunate, dissolute dead had imposed an indignity upon the struggling, pious living. Almost comical in hindsight—but saved from laughter by its muddled courage—is the rash and impassioned rhetoric of R.R., that castigated Sylvester’s would-be upstager, Oxford, while warning Sylvester of what must have been a physical peril existing only in R.R.’s mind. R.R.’s eulogy was published in 1611; therefore Sylvester was still very much alive six years after the first publication of *Divine Weeks*. Either R.R.’s poem had been written well before its publication, or R.R.’s hold on reality was slipping.

#### Towards a solution

Let us review. In 1590, the devout Puritan, Josuah Sylvester, begins to publish translations of portions of the works of the

Huguenot poet, Du Bartas (who dies in the same year). Sylvester continues to publish sporadically but steadily, until in 1605 he publishes *Divine Weeks*, a nearly complete translation of the vast *Semaines* of Du Bartas. In the publication of 1605, one among ten encomiasts, the Earl of Oxford (nominated by some as the living man behind the nom de plume, Shakespeare) is the posthumous contributor (for he has died in 1604) of a Latin poem of superficial praise for Sylvester’s translation. In fact, Oxford is not too discretely dismissive of Sylvester’s work, while claiming, by way of a Latin pun, that *he* is truly (*vere*) the voice of Du Bartas. In the course of succeeding editions several new testifiers to the excellence of Sylvester’s work are added to *Divine Weeks*, among them, in the 1611 edition, are Ben Jonson and the otherwise unidentified “R.R.”

Striking similarities in both language and thought point to Jonson’s Sylvester eulogy as the source for his *First Folio* eulogy to Shakespeare. However, just as significantly, the *Folio* eulogy also seems to echo R.R.’s poem.

In the opening lines of the *Folio* eulogy, Ben reassures his dead “beloved Author” of his “ample[ness]” (whatever that may mean) “To draw no envy” on his name (as we noted above, customary use of the parenthesis would imply that “(Shakespeare)” is *not* that name). Such a stark, *in medias res* pledge strongly implies that envy had been drawn on [somebody’s] name previously, and that the avoidance of any taint of it against Shakespeare is so important to Jonson that he begins his eulogy with two banal lines of envy disclaimer.

The eulogy of R.R. is an unrestrained attack on Oxford for belittling the work of Sylvester. R.R. claims that Oxford has been driven to mock Sylvester’s translation of Du Bartas out of *Envie* (enlarged upon in two of six stanzas) for the surpassing excellence of *Divine Weeks*. The great wonder in R.R.’s eulogy is that it contains an apparent swipe at Shakespeare as well. The vehemence or unbalance, even, of R.R.’s attack on the overweening *Envie* of Oxford (and Shakespeare?) for the artistry of Josuah Sylvester evokes the inference that Jonson has the eulogy of R.R. in mind when he indites the *Folio*, or that he may even be responding to it.

(Continued on page 16)



*Fitzgerald (Continued from page 15)*

If Oxford is Shakespeare, the allusions to Oxford and Shakespeare in R.R.'s poem necessarily refer to one man; and, in fact, the language of R.R.'s eulogy gives us no cause to think that there is more than one human target of his indignation. If we accept Jonson's eulogy as truly intended for Sylvester, it becomes a model of insincerity—no compulsory disbarment.

However, if we understand it as clandestinely addressed to Oxford, an Oxford who is Shakespeare, it becomes more comprehensible. For not being fraudulent, it becomes a noble composition; Jonson now is honestly extolling the lesser quantity of accomplished transformations of Du Bartas in Shakespeare, instead of having to lift up his voice with eyes rolling to commend the elephantine *Divine Weeks*. More importantly, it explains why Jonson returned to his faux praise of Josuah Sylvester in order to start off his moving eulogy to Shakespeare. *He didn't return to his faux praise*: he honestly eulogized the same man twice, Oxford in 1611 and "Shakespeare" twelve years later, in 1623; but in neither instance would conditions permit the citation of Oxford by name.

And so, this was the point I had reached, and the conclusions I had come to, in trying to make sense of the Jonson and R.R. eulogies as discrete productions, and in their relationship to each other. Still, I found the eulogy over R.R. troublesome and, beyond its veiled allusions, somehow unrevealed; I continued to read it and read it again.

It is a bad—more precisely, it is an incoherent—poem, but primarily because it is jammed too full of thought and image for the lineage to bear the load. The elements of the poem are dynamic, but like pieces from different puzzles thrown together on a tabletop, they fit only now and again. Especially frustrating was the inability to square the chimerical farrago of stanzas 3 through 6 with the beautiful and dramatic opening, "Foole that I was" (never the declaration of a genuine fool), and with the striking confidence and authoritativeness in lines 2 and 3 in the remark on the Muses, Chaucer, Spencer, and Daniel (Shakespeare, predictably, missing again).

Then it struck me: this is Ben Jonson, too! And of course! Both poems enter

*Divine Weeks* in 1611. Jonson's 1623 *Folio* eulogy to Shakespeare appears to have its source in his Sylvester eulogy. Because R.R. leveled so upon *Envie* in his eulogy, and because Jonson commences the *Folio* eulogy directly abjuring envy, I identified Jonson's Sylvester eulogy (understood to secretly honor Oxford) as the natural source from which to derive the inditement of the *First Folio* eulogy. The weakness of this interpretation lay in the random and singular good luck, for Jonson, of some distraught unknown Puritan, R.R., happening upon the scene, who wished to publish a frenzied commendation to *Divine Weeks*, and from which Jonson was able to generate his *Folio* introduction. In view of the

**"Arras' occurs twelve times in Shakespeare...ten involve the concealment of a character behind the arras. Arras is a loaded word in Shakespeare."**

apparent Oxfordian and Shakespearean referents in R.R.'s eulogy, it seems more sensible to suppose that Jonson, a professional creator of character in his own right, simply made up "R.R." and his eulogy as they fulfilled his purpose; the Jonson and R.R. eulogies came from one mind and pen, the mind and pen of Ben Jonson.

If the eulogy over R.R. were actually by Ben Jonson, then echoes of it in thought, word, or phrase might be found in the Jonson canon. I found two, both from the *Under-Woods* collection of Jonson's poems, printed posthumously in 1640 (earlier publications cannot be precluded; only Jonson's poetry was canvassed). Compare line 1, stanza 3, from the eulogy of R.R., "Let Gryll be Gryll: let *Envie's* vip'rous seed," with line 1 from *Under-Woods* 73, "Look up thou seed of envy, and still bring ..." I do not know how common a turn of thought or phrase "seed of envy" may have been during the lifetime of Jonson, and therefore cannot judge the degree of its ominousness here. Nevertheless, *ecce phrasid*.

Here again are the first 3 lines from stanza 4 of R.R.'s eulogy:

But Mother *Envie*, if this *Arras* spunne  
Of golden threads be seene of English eyes,  
Why then (alas) our *Cob-Webs* are undone.

Compare them with lines 3-6 below from *Under-Woods* 84.9. This poem is a lengthy segment from a very long poem (*Eupheme*) often parts dedicated to Lady Venetia Digby. The ninth poem was a eulogy composed for the passing of Lady Digby. It was titled, "Elegie on my muse." This work comes very near the end of *Under-Woods*, and in the vicinity of poems entered with dates in the 1630s. It would appear to have been written well after the R.R. eulogy passage.

The spirit that I wrote with, and conceiv'd,  
All that was good, or great in me she weav'd,  
And set forth; the rest were Cobwebs fine,  
Spun out in name of some of the old *Nine*!

Between these two passages there is, first, identity of vocabulary: *Cob-webs*-*Cobwebs* and *spunne*-*Spun*. Both treat as a metaphor something woven: in R.R., "this *Arras* spunne / of golden threads"; in *Under-Woods*, "All that was good, or great in me she weav'd." What the *Arras* represents R.R. does not reveal, although its being spun from golden threads implies something valuable or noble in nature. The inestimable value of Lady Digby's "weaving" is manifest. In conspicuous, parallel extensions of ideation, "cobwebs" represent slippages from the ideal state. In R.R., for reasons not explained, if the *golden Arras* is seen by English eyes, it is reduced to the work of spiders. In *Under-Woods*, that verse-making of Jonson not inspired by Lady Digby was but the work of spiders.

Lady Digby, as befits a muse, is a powerful, benignant, maternal force. So, inexplicably, is Mother *Envie*, for she is apostrophized and rather appealed to by R.R. What makes Mother *Envie* and her three lines so extraordinary is, apart from the tag *Envie*, the totality of their conceptual isolation from the *Envie* that went before and the *Envie* that follows. The *Envie* in the van is associated by R.R. with crickets, vipers, corpses and snapping dogs. The *Envie* that brings up the rear continues female, but R.R.'s description of her puts one more in mind of the Whore of Babylon than of the Heliconian sisters.

It is difficult to countenance the notion that the Lady Digby and Mother *Envie* passages are unrelated, if substance and weight are to be assigned to textual conformities. Consequently the greater likelihood



is that both passages and poems were written by Ben Jonson.

### Conclusion

I believe that Ben Jonson wrote the two 1611 eulogies in *Divine Weeks* to sustain Oxford's connection to the works of Shakespeare. Whether Jonson acted on his own or as the agent of a hidden hand, we cannot know, but his function as a sympathetic agent seems the more likely, in view of his eventual editorship of the *First Folio*. If we call to mind the post mortem publication of his own mock eulogy to Sylvester in 1605, it would seem that Oxford in death continued to retain through proxies a real, if circumscribed, power. This power was seemingly exerted again in 1611. Jonson's *Folio* eulogy to Shakespeare of 1623 looked back to the Jonson and "R.R." eulogies of 1611. Were the machinations of 1611 carried out with a view to a 1623?

Reading it now as the work of Ben Jonson, let us look again at the eulogy of R.R. What we first took for addled sincerity we may now take for calculated farce, and a typically brilliant Jonsonian delivery of disinformation. Jonson may have thought that he could slip past more of the unsayable by the distraction of raging and flailing than by composing a generic soporific commendation. "Arras" occurs twelve times in Shakespeare. Two instances involve neutral references to the arras as an item in the physical world. The remaining ten involve the *concealment* of a character behind the arras. Arras is a loaded word in Shakespeare. I noted above what seem echoes of *Hamlet* in Jonson's Sylvester eulogy. *Hamlet*'s killing of Polonius lurking behind the arras is a famous and dramatic moment in the play. If Oxford is Shakespeare then Oxford is *Hamlet*. In an ironic and penetrable figure, did Jonson put Oxford behind the Arras of "Shakespeare?" The eulogy by R.R. looks more and more like a Jonson confection.

William Drummond recorded Jonson's declaration that couplets are "the bravest sort of verses, especially when they are broken, like hexameters." Andrew Hannas observes that, "by 'broken, like hexameters' Jonson means having a principal caesura or rhetorical pause—generally near

the middle of the line—in imitation of the classical dactylic hexameter, the form used for epic verse. In English such pause would be emphasized by a comma or stronger punctuation; indeed, the medially pointed, rhymed couplet (pentameter or tetrameter) is arguably Jonson's signature verse-form. Though the 'R.R.' poem uses the ababcc stanza in imitation of *Venus and Adonis*, its punctuation shows at least 22 medial caesuras out of the 36 lines. As for the rhyme-form, Jonson did in fact choose the ababcc form for Epigrams VIII and XVII."

We owe Ben our reverent gratitude. He was a first-rate playwright, and maybe a better poet, who had the appalling misfortune to appear on the world's stage with the

*"Needless to say, Jonson was addressing those readers who could see through the Arras, and telling them...keep your mouths shut about the true weaver at the loom."*

supreme literary glory of the ages. C. S. Lewis once observed that teetotaling is not a virtue if you do not hanker after strong drink. Ben Jonson was plagued with a capacious, quarrelsome, emulous nature. As good a writer as he was, and that was very good indeed, he would never be as good as Shakespeare. There must have been moments of despondency when the genius of Shakespeare had Jonson thinking about bricks, mortar, and trowel. But when it mattered, in 1611 and 1623, Ben Jonson overcame his nature and stood steadfast, acting loyally in behalf of Oxford; and in behalf of Shakespeare.

I now conceive the Mother *Envie* lines as alluding to the peremptory political necessity of keeping hidden Oxford's authorship of the works of Shakespeare; there is in those three lines the hint of intercessory edict or plea: Do not, I beg you, presume or attempt to see through this "golden fabric"; for if you acquire a true understanding of it, you will destroy it. Needless to say, Jonson was addressing those readers who *could* see through the *Arras*, and telling them, in effect, keep your mouths shut about the true weaver at the loom. (The essence of the R.R. eulogy amounted to: Hsst, Oxford is Shakespeare—now forget what you

heard! Pity Jonson whose variation on carrying water in a sieve was to be entasked to simultaneously connect and disconnect Oxford to the works and name of Shakespeare.)

I would conjecture that Ben had been given to understand, as editor-to-be of the *First Folio*, or had concluded on his own, that an excessively broad dissemination of the tacit recognition that the Earl of Oxford stood behind the penname Shakespeare might provoke the destruction or permanent suppression of the several unpublished manuscripts. Would not many of the powerful and literary have agonized on this exigency, all the way up to James I? (Oxford's eulogy in the 1605 *Divine Weeks* had probably generated some stir among the illuminati, and necessitated all this monitory spin-doctoring by Ben Jonson.)

The great amphora of "Shakespeare" lost to the world but for shards. O rare Ben Jonson! lacking your invincible genius for double talk in 1611 and 1623, the world might have turned out a poorer place for the human spirit to grow and thrive. Therefore let us read once more, honoring the man as we depart, those four *Hamlet*-tinged lines from the Sylvester eulogy of Ben Jonson:

Behold! The reverend Shade of BARTAS  
stands  
Before my thought, and (in thy right [Shakespeare!]) commands  
That to the world I publish for him This;  
BARTAS doth wish thy English now were  
His.

\* \* \*

In the 1950 film version of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, in the closing scene, Cyrano, like Du Bartas, a warrior-poet from Gascony, has just died of his wounds in the company of his secret beloved, Roxanne, in her convent garden. During the moments before his death, Roxanne realizes that it was Cyrano who secretly composed all the expressions of love received from her own beloved, slain in battle, and for whom she took the veil. In anguish she cries, "I loved one man and now I have lost him twice!"

(Those not acquainted with Andrew Hannas should know that in the development of the *Du Bartas-Jonson* material his aid was indispensable, as Homer's ocean deep was wine dark. JF)



## Oxfordian News

# Authorship on the Campus: Papers and Student Panel Debate at CAES Conference at Ball State; Sobran Debates at Boston College

### Indiana

Yet another academic community has yielded to the surge of interest among educators and students for more information and reports on new research discoveries about the actual author of the works of Shakespeare. The twenty-eighth annual CAES (Committee for the Advancement of Early Studies) Conference, directed by Dr. Bruce Hozeski, convened on the campus of **Ball State University** in **Muncie, Indiana** from October 17th-18th, and featured several presentations to conference attendees on the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

A brisk but entirely friendly interchange of opinion and argument among Stratfordians and Oxfordians punctuated the weekend's proceedings, but the highlights of the conference were the many fine papers (principally Oxfordian in thesis) read by graduate and undergraduate students of Dr. David Richardson of Cleveland State University. Other noted Oxfordians in attendance at the CAES Conference were Dr. Jack Shuttleworth, Chair of the English Department at the US Air Force Academy, and Dr. Daniel Wright, Chair of the English Department at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon (and also a Ball State alum).

Dr. Shuttleworth shared Oxfordian insights with skeptical Stratfordians in attendance at the conference, and Dr. Wright presented a paper entitled, "'A man is but what he knoweth': Why the Shakespeare Canon Cannot Be the Work of the Man from Stratford." Several open-minded Stratfordians were engaged by the discussions, debates, and papers read at the conference. As more walls of Stratfordian orthodoxy within academia continue to crumble, there is good reason, therefore, to hope for yet more captures of the keeps of academia by the bearers of the Oxfordian standard in months and years to come.

Prof. Richardson reports that the student panels on the authorship were among the best attended during the Conference, and that the atmosphere was quite open and positive. In fact, two of the Cleveland State graduate

student participants (Jennifer Mattingly and James Maxfield) will be traveling to Concordia University in Portland next spring to present the results of their expanded studies at the Edward de Vere Studies Conference.

Dr. Wright noted that, while there were no "Damascus-like conversions [or] new Society members in evidence from his talk," he did find most of the professors he came in contact with to be receptive and interested. Several have already indicated that they will attend the De Vere Studies Conference next spring.

Dr. Wright reports that the De Vere Studies Conference agenda is already quite full, with speakers from the ranks of Oxfordians plus Dr. Richardson's graduate students and several "non-Oxfordian" professors and teachers from around the country scheduled to appear.

### Massachusetts

On October 30th Joseph Sobran came to town to take on three Stratfordians in a debate at **Boston College**. The debate had been arranged by Father Ronald Tacelli of Boston College and was sponsored by the College's St. Thomas More Society. Father Tacelli had read Sobran's *Alias Shakespeare* last spring and found himself so interested in the authorship issue that he went straight from being an interested observer to an activist.

The debate format called for Sobran to speak for thirty minutes, followed by five to seven minutes of rebuttal from each of the three Stratfordians, and then questions from the audience.

For Oxfordians in attendance the evening was quite interesting. Sobran's talk was similar to his appearance at the conference in Seattle earlier in October. In short, he built his case on the personal testimony of the *Sonnets*, and how the *Sonnets* and such "personal" plays as *Hamlet* resonate with parallels to Oxford's life. But it was remarks by the all three Stratfordians during their rebuttals that provided some of the evening's most interesting and quotable lines.

All three rebuttals covered the basic points anyone engaged in the authorship debate is familiar with, e.g. the chronology, the testi-

mony of contemporaries that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare, the impossibility of any conspiracy, the methodology of Oxfordians in using the works of Shakespeare as evidence and then quoting "selectively" from the works, etc.

Prof. Thomas Howard, who teaches undergraduate Shakespeare courses at BC, spent much time talking of how his "maverick personality half-wishes that Sobran were right," further commenting that "I'd be the first to be delighted if we found out that these [the *Sonnets*] were written by the Earl of Oxford," and concluding with "You [Sobran] have placed a burr under my saddle, but I still think I'm sitting on the horse."

Prof. Dennis Taylor (also from Boston College) then spoke, and after listing some basic questions he felt Oxfordians must answer, he turned to his current research for a book on Shakespeare that will explore the theory that Shakespeare [i.e. Stratford] was a secret Catholic. This would, he stated, then explain some of the mystery about the author's true feelings and about his shadowy whereabouts during the years of his greatest fame. His concluding comment was, "The English Catholic and Protestant split was a repressed trauma in English life [every bit as important] as Shakespeare and the Shakespeare authorship story ... unearthing the true story of Shakespeare might have a lot to do with unearthing that buried trauma."

The final Stratfordian to speak was also the most notable. Prof. John Tobin of the University of Massachusetts-Boston is co-editor of the new *Riverside Shakespeare*. Prof. Tobin was the most outspoken of the three in his defense of the Stratford story, and began by expressing his disappointment at how much time Sobran had been given compared with the three rebutters. He did praise Sobran for having written what he described as "the very finest argument for Oxford," but added that "he [Sobran] knows many, but not enough, of the facts."

Finally, then, he went on to make the usual points, giving much emphasis to the standard chronology as excluding Oxford altogether because of all the post-1604 plays. "For



Oxfordians," he concluded, "the problem is 1604 and selective interpretation."

Prof. Tobin also made an interesting observation about the state of orthodox scholarship in the 1990s. He said, "It is a mistake to think of establishment Shakespeareans as closed-minded... we are particularly interested in broadening the Canon ... [In the new *Riverside*] we included a new play (*Edward III*), and arguments in behalf of Shakespeare as a collaborator (*Henry VI, Part I, Henry VIII, Two Noble Kinsmen*, and even—surprisingly—*Measure for Measure*)." He did not mention *The Funeral Elegy*, which is also included in the new *Riverside*.

What was most notable throughout the evening for the local Oxfordians in attendance was that none of the three Stratfordians actually engaged the substance of Sobran's presentation, and all continued "not to engage it" even by the evening's end, as Sobran asked them more than once to do so.

Sobran's thesis? That Oxfordians *can* argue their case from the poems and plays of "their candidate," but that Stratfordians *cannot*. His final comment for the evening was, "I focused on two works (*Hamlet* and the *Sonnets*). Both point to Oxford. Show us they don't. Show us they point to Willie."

Instead, as was so amply demonstrated by Prof. Tobin, the Stratfordian arguments continually marshall the same small set of external facts that supposedly link the Stratford man to the theatre, and therefore, by default, must mean that all references to "Shakespeare" must be to the Stratford man.

Comments overheard afterwards confirmed that, for many in attendance, Sobran had made an effective presentation for his thesis and his opponents had not.

Also in Boston, the **Boston Neighborhood Network** (BNN), a community cable outlet serving the city of Boston, was recently the scene of two cable broadcasts on the Shakespeare Authorship Question. The two programs were produced by Oxfordians John Fahey and Dr. Gary Vezzoli, and featured the presentation of evidence and arguments supporting the Oxfordian position, plus selected scenes from the plays, performed by actors of Dr. Vezzoli's company, The Fenway Players.

The most recent program was a live broadcast with call-in participation forming part of BNN's Politics Today series. Dr. Vezzoli discussed establishment ties with the Stratford Shakespeare Industry, and the forces in the

## Column

### The Paradigm Shift

by Mark K. Anderson

## Beauty and "Bottom's Dream"

In the last issue of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, the specter of physicist Werner Heisenberg—godfather of quantum mechanics and discoverer of the uncertainty principle which bears his name—was invoked in an attempt to lay out some of the intuitive appeal of the Oxfordian theory.

Heisenberg valued the concept of beauty in a theory, and one of his remarks on the subject speaks to a quality contained in Looney's looney idea.

"Beauty," as he said in a 1970 address to the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, "is the proper conformity of the parts to one another and to the whole."

Having already considered examples of the truth of this remark at the level of individual words and sentences, we can now ratchet up the rigging to a higher level of meaning.

Heisenberg's notion of "beauty," that is, can be appreciated as one stands back from a painting as well as at the level of individual brush strokes. Indeed, art lovers would no doubt add that much meaning and aesthetic value is lost when one focuses too much on the microscopic. A painter uses individual strokes to be considered

with all the rest of her strokes on the canvas, not to be studied in isolation. And so it appears to be with a good theory—it should only get better as one stands back to look at the whole canvas or at one canvas in relation to other works in the gallery.

In this column, I'll consider Heisenberg's remark in the context of not a word or a sentence but an entire scene—Bottom and company's enactment of "Pyramus and Thisbe" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 5, Scene 1.

As it is typically performed today, Bottom's play-within-a-play is an interlude given over to buffoonery and light laughs. Of course, it's undeniably a very funny scene, and it holds plenty of opportunities for a good comic actor to show off his or her skills.

But there's more to Bottom's antics than such surface-level interpretations would allow. Indeed, the beauty of the Oxfordian theory reveals itself to those willing to dig beneath the surface.

As anyone familiar with the play knows, the dramatic centerpiece of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the marriage do-si-do

(Continued on page 20)

halls of academia perpetuating, by force of authority, the Stratfordian myth.

The first of the two programs had been taped last April 22nd and broadcast shortly thereafter. In this program Dr. Richard Desper and Dr. Charles Birney discussed the authorship issue, covering the basics about the life of Edward de Vere and the publication of the *First Folio* as a de Vere family project.

Various actors from The Fenway Players presented scenes from *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, *Much Ado* and *Henry V* to illustrate some of the points being made, and also participated in the panel discussion segment of the program.

The Fenway Players gave an autumn production of *Othello* in the Boston area, with publicity acknowledging the play as the "work of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford."

## Germany

A new authorship publication, *The New Shakespeare Journal*, will soon appear in Germany and Austria. The journal will be in German, thus bringing the latest news and research on the authorship debate to a whole new readership in Europe.

The editors are Uwe Laugwitz and Robert Detebo. The editors have already asked for permission to reprint at least four articles from recent *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletters*.

They will also be providing their readers with a selection of materials from other authorship publications and new material from European anti-Stratfordians of all persuasions, including, of course, Oxfordians.



Anderson (Continued from page 19)

game played by two young ladies (Helena and Hermia) and two suitors (Demetrius and Lysander). And, as it happens, the quartet's matchmaking and mis-matchmaking adventures line up nicely with the nuptial antics leading to the 1595 marriage of Oxford's first daughter, Elizabeth to William Stanley, Earl of Derby.

Without entering into a scholarly analysis of the correspondences—neither space nor format allows for such—suffice it to note that the broken third-party marriage arrangement between Demetrius and Hermia followed by Hermia's marriage to Lysander at least roughly parallels the broken third-party marriage arrangement between the Earl of Southampton and Elizabeth Vere followed by Elizabeth Vere's marriage to Derby. (Some Stratfordian scholars have speculated that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first performed at the Vere-Derby wedding, which would further implicate the Vere-Derby match as potential dramatic fodder for the play.)

While the four romantic leads gallivant in the forest, falling in love and falling under the spell of Puck's potions, the weaver Bottom and his crew work up to their performance of "Pyramus and Thisbe." The Ovidian tale of unrequited love, in fact, caps *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Only a series of epilogues by Puck and the Fairy King and Queen stands between the end of Bottom's drama and the final curtain of the entire play.

Within the orthodox theory of authorship, then, "Bottom's Dream"—as Bottom calls his interlude—provides a comic ending to the play and burlesques the themes found throughout the drama. "As a part of the whole play the performance is organic not only because it is the achieved goal of the artisan-plot, but also by its relevance to the main themes: love, and the relation between imagination, illusion and reality," writes Harold F. Brooks in his introduction to the Arden edition of *A Midsummer's Night Dream*.

That's about it, though. Stratfordian discussion of any "proper conformity" between Bottom's interlude and the rest of the play scarcely if ever ventures beyond the broad-sweeping themes Brooks writes about.

But if one allows for the above Vere-

Derby-Southampton / Hermia-Lysander-Demetrius parallels to creep in, the conformity Heisenberg seeks emerges like the fairies who populate *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* woods.

First, one need only recall that Southampton was the dedicatee of numerous works of literature akin to the story of "Pyramus and Thisbe." So Bottom's reworking of the old tale gains a satirical edge as a commentary on the many hacks who dedicated editions of their verse to Southampton after "Shake-speare" did so in *Venus & Adonis* and *Lucrece*.

Some of these works—such as John Clapham's *Narcissus*, Thomas Powell's *Welsh Bayte* and Thomas Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*—name Southampton as the dedicatee. (Nashe also dedicated but never published a bawdy poem "The Choice of Valentines" to a "Lord S. ... the fairest bud the red rose ever bore." Southampton's biographers C.C. Stopes and G.P.V. Akrigg have both argued that Nashe's "Lord S." is Southampton.)

Other tales—such as Drayton's *Endymion and Phoebe*, Chapman's *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*, Thomas Peend's *Harmaphroditus and Salmacis*, Lodge's *Scylla* and Heywood's *Oenone and Paris*—follow the *Venus & Adonis* model closely enough that a nod to Southampton can reasonably be inferred.

One other work bears closer scrutiny in the present context. That is, in 1597, William Burton dedicated his *Clitophon and Leucippe*—an English translation of a romance by Achilles Tatius—to Southampton. The tale it tells casts both "Pyramus and Thisbe" and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a revealing light.

The young lover Clitophon, as Burton tells it, finds himself in an unwanted marriage arrangement made by his father and instead pines for his true love Leucippe. (In this case, Clitophon's distaste for his father's marriage plans is heightened by the fact that Clitophon's proposed bride is also his half-sister.)

The two lovers elope, and, as in "Pyramus," one of them mistakenly learns in the midst of the drama that the other has been slain. Unlike the tragic ending of "Pyramus," though, Clitophon and Leucippe's story ends happily with their

wedding in the presence of Leucippe's father.

Considering the above in the light of Heisenberg's dictum, one can see that even a cursory Oxfordian reading of "Bottom's Dream" reveals entirely new layers of "proper conformit[ies] of the parts to one another and to the whole."

As noted above, since Bottom presents an Ovidian tale before Demetrius and company, Bottom's work can be seen as a spoof of the many Ovidian imitations presented to Southampton. But since the publication of *Venus & Adonis* is itself related to the Elizabeth Vere-Southampton marriage match (a fact well documented in Ogburn, Looney, etc.), "Bottom's Dream" is also Shakespeare's self-deprecating portrait of his own "unpolished lines."

Viewed in this light, the autobiographical character Theseus would in a sense become a co-author of Bottom's masque. And that may in fact be part of the joke when in lines 42-84, Theseus repeatedly insists on viewing "Pyramus and Thisbe" despite the protestations of Athens' Master of Revels. As Oxford must have done on many occasions, Theseus both mocks the drama and demands that it be shown, whether it's "extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain" or not.

Furthermore, like Hamlet's "Mousetrap," Bottom's masque also functions like a dumb show of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It retells the essential elements of the drama in the guise of an ancient tale. In Hollywood terms, it's conveying to the audience (which is both the characters on stage and the actual audience) something about the "back story" of Demetrius (Pyramus) and Hermia (Thisbe). They may have come to love each other at some point, it says, but there's a wall that separates them from one another. And, as a note of caution, it shows that a tragic end would have befallen Demetrius and Hermia had they instead gone through with her father's marriage agreement.

Finally, Bottom's staging of "Pyramus and Thisbe" brings to mind the language of Sonnet 116. ("Let me not to the marriage of true minds/ Admit impediments...") It is as if The Wall that separates the two protagonists is the ultimate impediment in preventing the lovers' amorous intents. Rather, the only things The Wall—which is actually a



character in Bottom's play—allows to pass between Pyramus and Thisbe are conversations and plans. The Wall will not be an "impediment" in uniting matters of the "mind"; it will only impede where matters of love and marriage are concerned. ("I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all," says Thisbe after she tries to kiss Pyramus through a chink in the wall.)

Once Pyramus and Thisbe have unknowingly sealed their fate never to become lovers—they both agree to meet at "Ninny's tomb" where they will both die—The Wall acknowledges that his job is done: "Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so; And, being done, thus Wall away doth go." (Lines 207-208)

Over two essays, we have seen several instances where Stratfordian interpretations find few if any "proper conformit[ies] of the parts to one another and to the whole" and where only a few paragraphs of Oxfordian gloss deliver the desired conformities in abundance. That, in Heisenberg's terms, is beauty.

It has also become apparent that as one climbs to higher levels of "parts" to "whole"—i.e. from words to sentences to scenes—the Oxfordian interpretations gain multiple layers of "conformities" while any gems Stratfordian readings turn up diminish in carat and hew.

This is perhaps where Oxfordians should consider their home turf. For while orthodox scholars may be able to sneak in a topicality or two with individual words ("the author's father was a glover, and perhaps he heard the words 'paring knife' in his father's shop..."), there is little the Stratfordian theory can deliver vis-a-vis higher levels of "conformity" in the works.

And it's this same "beauty" contest that ultimately determines the superiority of one theory over another. As J.W.N. Sullivan, biographer of both Newton and Beethoven, wrote in 1919, "The measure of the success of a scientific theory is, in fact, a measure of its aesthetic value, since it is a measure of the extent to which it has introduced harmony in what was before chaos."

(For a more comprehensive discussion of aesthetics in theory see S. Chandrasekhar's *Truth and Beauty: Aesthetics and Motivations in Science* (U. Chicago Press, 1987))

## Book Reviews:

**Global Shakespeare Series, edited by Dom Saliani.** (International Thomson Publishing, 1996-97; in the United States through South-Western Educational Publishing, Cincinnati OH 45227-9985; and in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom.) \$10.95 per volume.

By Richard F. Whalen

Dom Saliani of Calgary, a former trustee, is the editor of a new series of Shakespeare's plays being published by one of the largest educational publishers in the world. Designed to reach students who are studying Shakespeare for the first time, the series will undoubtedly surprise and delight them—and their teachers—with its refreshing candor, informality, and brash good humor. "Relish the stories, the people and the language," it says, in effect. "Forget the solemn scholarship for now."

Five plays "with related readings" have been issued so far, along with *Introducing Shakespeare*, a 96-page booklet that sets the tone. Irreverent cartoons abound. Shakespeare's "cliches" introduce the students to his ringing language and rich vocabulary. The students are then invited to create their own three-word Shakespearean sounding insults. Calvin and Hobbes, Garfield and other modern-day cartoons lampooning Shakespeare liven the pages. Moving to more serious matter, the introduction asks the students to consider some of the most famous speeches, dramatic scenes and sonnets. If Saliani, an experienced English teacher, is right, the students at this point will be intrigued by Shakespeare and ready to engage "the immortal Bard."

The introductory volume addresses the author's biography with a question: "Who Was William Shakespeare?" The six-sentence answer starts, "Not much is known..." Many believe we don't know who he was. Some think he was from Stratford; others see much of court life in the plays and offer Bacon, Oxford, even Queen Elizabeth or King James I. "We may never fully resolve

the identity..." And that's it for now, and probably that's all that's needed for first-time readers of Shakespeare. Then follow three quotations by Voltaire, Bridges and Darwin who considered Shakespeare dull and degrading. Just the thing to disarm a bunch of skeptical teenagers about this "universal genius."

The series seems to be a success already, with total sales of more than 100,000 for the introduction and the first five plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Dom Saliani is working on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello* and *Twelfth Night*. The attractive format designed by Liz Harasymczuk certainly has contributed to the series's success. Each 8x10, soft-cover volume is in full color. The illustrations are simple and bold, nothing fancy. The text is the thing. The text is set in a single-column with "footnotes" in the side margin. Character names are spelled out, not abbreviated, throughout the play. Each scene gets a very brief summary, typically two to six sentences; and following each act are provocative questions and suggested projects.

The introductions to each of the plays include some background on its first appearance and sources. Saliani, for example, says scholars date *Hamlet* as early as 1589 or as late as 1601. He notes that Shakespeare's source may have been in French—Belleforest's 1570 translation of Saxo Grammaticus's story of Amleth.

Each play also comes with about twenty, short "related readings." For *Hamlet* they range from "Shakespeare Changed My Life" by TV journalist Robert MacNeil and Tom Stoppard's 15-Minute *Hamlet* to "Amleth's Revenge" by Saxo Grammaticus and "The Imagery of *Hamlet*" by Caroline Spurgeon. For advanced students, each volume concludes with the ten most difficult questions about the play.

All in all, however, this series from International Thomson is a most friendly Shakespeare. Teachers can call 800-824-5179 for more information about the series and perhaps an examination copy.



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## From the Editor:

### After Two Years...

With this issue we complete two years of publishing the newsletter out of Boston. And what an eventful two years it has been!

In making the changes that we did, it was not just the format of the newsletter that was to be changed, but also the content, with an emphasis on reporting the "news" of the authorship debate, from Society matters, to the world of Shakespearean scholarship, to the world at large. As we found, there was—and continues to be—no shortage of news on any of these fronts.

As members are also aware, we promised a second Society publication—*The Oxfordian*—two years ago, one that would accommodate the lengthier research articles that are given at the annual conference or sometimes submitted to us. We are pleased to announce that this new journal will be published in 1998, with the first issue mailed to our entire membership this spring.

In preparing our last issue on the tenth anniversary coverage of the Moot Court Trial we had occasion to "revisit" our recent past and the efforts of those who brought the authorship debate and our Society into

the 1990s. The work of Charlton Ogburn, Gordon Cyr and Morse Johnson was instrumental in keeping the authorship flame alive throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Since the Summer issue was mailed out much continues to happen, and the names of these same three gentlemen appear again in this issue. Letters from Ogburn and Cyr (see Letters page) remind us of their skill, knowledge and, most especially, of their continued passionate involvement in the debate.

On a sadder note, Morse Johnson, newsletter editor from 1986-1995, passed away in November. Morse's tenure as editor involved everything from editing, to writing, to providing the financial support to keep it coming out regularly for the nine years he was in charge.

As members realize, it is the newsletter that has provided continuity to our organization and to the Oxfordian movement over the years. Morse's role in running it, supporting it, and making it an excellent source for much new research and news for Oxfordians everywhere cannot be underestimated.

## A Change of Seasons

Readers may have noticed that this issue of the Newsletter is designated as the "Fall 1997/Winter 1998" issue. We have done this in order to bring the seasonal designation of each issue into line with the time of year that issues are actually published and received by members.

Over past years the publication schedule had gradually been slipping, so that issues were finally being received by members in the beginning of the season after

that designated for the issue (i.e. the Fall issue received in December). This in turn occasionally led to confusion about whether members may have missed an issue.

With this change we will maintain the publishing schedule of four issues during each calendar year, with those issues still being published during March (Spring issue), June (Summer issue), September (Fall issue), and December (Winter issue).

## Correction

In our last issue the article "Shakespeare and the Fair Youth" contained two errors about which Charlton Ogburn had notified us before publication, but which unfortunately did not get corrected.

The second paragraph should have read, "If the poet's attachment to the young friend had been homosexual, common sense tells us that in addressing a sequence of sonnets to him, he would never have de-

voted the first 17 to urging the 20-year-old to marry and thus terminate the relationship—write an absolute *finis* to it, unless we believe the bride would condone its continuation, of which she could have hardly failed to be aware."

And in the seventh paragraph it is Francis Drake being honored at Plymouth, not Walter Raleigh.



## Letters:

To the Editor:

The article on The 1987 Moot Court Trial is on the whole highly enlightening. However, I feel I have to set the record straight as it concerns my reaction to what took place on that September morning.

You write that upon Ogburn's reading James Boyle's brief "much to his horror he found it to be page after page of what he considered to be boiler-plate Stratfordian arguments." Since that is exactly what I expected, it would hardly have horrified me. My shock had a quite different source. This I had reason to explain some weeks after the trial when I learned that Boyle's brief was to be published in the American University law review. As I wrote the Dean of the College of Law, "When I was shown Boyle's brief in advance of the trial, I was appalled, horrified, by what I read.. It was only too plain that such an avalanche of falsity was beyond Peter Jaszi's power to deal with, expose for what it was, within the limits of the opportunity given him." From that first sentence, the letter (of which I sent you a copy) goes to cite instances of Boyle's misrepresenting what Oxfordians believe and what I had stated in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* with the plain object of destroying both. I went on to declare that I could not believe that the young man introduced to me could have descended to the argumentation he claimed to have written and that I had felt I was doing him a favor in absolving him of blame for it. (I thought I knew who the actual author was.) I reiterated

in a letter to Boyle himself (who is unrelated, of course, to the Boyles) that "I cannot bring myself to believe that the attractive, decent-seeming-young Scotsman introduced to me" could compose a brief "built on factual dishonesty." Among the examples of misrepresentation I cited to Dean Anderson and Mr. Boyle were:

"The Oxfordians attribute a conspiracy (by Queen Elizabeth and the rest) who are both funding de Vere's playwrighting activities and trying to suppress the plays...." This charge, reiterated elsewhere by Boyle is of course totally fallacious. We have stressed that Queen Elizabeth valued the plays for their eloquent appeal to English patriotism in the face of the menace from Spain and for graphically depicting the bloody disasters that could follow a disputed succession, as Elizabeth's was.

"... suppress the plays by foisting them off on an illiterate from Stratford, who just happened to have exactly the same name as de Vere's pseudonym." First, foisting the plays on another would hardly result in their suppression, and secondly, as we have fully demonstrated, the Stratfordian's name was consistently spelled—and by himself as well—as calling for a short "a" in the first syllable: viz.: Shaksper, Shakspe, Shagsper, Shaxpere, Shaksby, etc. It was plainly not the name so frequently rendered as Shake-speare by the dramatist's contemporaries, a name descriptive of an action.

[Oxfordians assert that de Vere] "obsessively maintained a mask of secrecy." We maintain, of course, that he bitterly regretted that he could not acknowledge his authorship of the masterpieces he had

written, that "I, once gone, to all the world must die." Not only did he never, so far as we know, employ the name William Shakespeare except in the dedications of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* but he planted hints in the plays as to who their author was. Boyle, in fact, wildly charges that —

"The Oxfordians must also present de Vere as a person who is revealing his name over and over again in almost every line of his plays." Evidently Boyle does not expect to be taken seriously.

"The plaintiff [the Oxfordians] makes much of the fact that de Vere was a published author of poems and plays under his own name." De Vere, of course, never published a single play under his name and Oxfordians have never suggested that he did.

"Ben Jonson, Shakespeare's friend, whose lavish praise of Shakespeare's work is seen by Oxfordians as a fiendishly subtle way of denouncing Shakespeare as a fraud and pointing the finger at Oxford." And "It is rather sad that this personal tribute from one great playwright to another [Jonson's introductory poem to the *First Folio*] should be taken for denigration, irony and deceit." Boyle cannot, of course, cite a single statement by Oxfordians to support this monstrous charge, in replying to which in my letter to Dean Anderson I quote what I wrote in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* that "Probably no other writer in history has received such a tribute from a fellow" and speak of "Jonson's ringing acclamation of Shakespeare." I added that "The question that keeps arising in my mind is how a polemicist with so little conscience [as Boyle] can live with himself."

"[Oxford] was publicly accusing his wife of adultery." This is offered as quoted from my book, in which I made no such statement and in fact declare that "Oxford was not [repeat not] accusing his wife of adultery."

"Ogburn seems to hint that de Vere ... wrote most of John Lyly's novels and all of his plays." Needless to say, I do not.

"Apparently Ogburn believes that the Chief Constable of Stratford is somehow mixed up in a mysterious effort to downplay a criminal attempt to break into the monument in search of exactly those [i.e., Shakespeare's] manuscripts." What I wrote was exactly the opposite, that the Chief

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the true author of the Shakespeare works, to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication, and to foster an enhanced appreciation and enjoyment of the poems and plays.

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*Letters (Continued from page 23)*

Constable and the head of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust were the only ones who stood warrant for there having been such a break-in.

"Elizabeth was many things—but she was not one who would fund plays that aimed at her overthrow." Boyle is speaking of Richard the Second, and to charge that I considered it aimed at Elizabeth's overthrow is about as deep into falsehood as even James Boyle would venture.

But you know all this and more, for I sent you a copy not only of my letter to Dean Anderson but copies also of those I wrote to James Boyle and to President Richard Berendzen of American University. Incidentally, I did not write "letters" to Prof. Boyle, as you state; when one went unanswered, that was enough. When my first, appreciative letter to President Berendzen, in which I suggested that the University dissociate itself from Prof. Boyle's mendacious brief, went unanswered I wrote another, shorter, reminding him that Boyle's holding me up to scorn and ridicule "would be actionable under the law of libel."

From none of those to whom I wrote did I receive a reply or any evidence of their concern over the slander to which I had been subjected.

I did hear from Peter Jaszi. He began his letter with his decision to "omit all the polite preliminaries" and went on to declare that "I hate to see the 'high ground' we achieved jeopardized through the circulation of a personal attack on someone who worked to the best of his ability to see that the event [the trial] was a success." He weighed into me for two pages. "...I know James Boyle to be a person of the highest honor and integrity as well as a brilliant young scholar with a rapidly growing reputation in legal academia. For these reasons he is deeply affronted by your charges and concerned that they be repeated. He has not written to you directly because he has received legal advice that it would be inappropriate to do so."

But what about the substance of my charges—that he had deliberately misrepresented what I had written? Said Prof. Jaszi as cool as you please, "I have not read your letter to James so I cannot comment specifically on your charges that the author of his

brief behaved in any intellectually dishonest manner. Indeed, I do not wish to know the details—the less circulation such accusations receive the better, in my view." As for the basis of the accusations, it was immaterial. No one was going to take up arms against a fellow law professor of Jaszi's, even in defense of his reputation and means of livelihood.

Back, for a finale, to the article in the *Newsletter*. In it you refer casually to "the Stratford actor." Because the spokesman for our side at the trial before the British Law Lords conceded under questioning that the Stratfordian was an actor, which he certainly was not, and cannot therefore have been illiterate, which he certainly was, it was made easier for their lordships to find against us.

I did, it is true, oppose holding the trial, but it was because, as I wrote Dean Anderson, the moot court would be a trial of my book, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, in which I would not be permitted to speak a word in its defense. I also opposed it because demolishing the long-revered Stratfordian "Shakespeare" and establishing Oxford in his place in little more than an hour would be impossible.

As for your facetious (I suppose) ending, in which you foresee that "one by one future generations may simply ... leave Stratford and all that will be left is a ghost town full of bewildered scholars," I withhold comment.

I do agree with your assessment of the fruits of the moot court. While it was doubtless generally perceived that de Vere's supporters had lost the trial, an added impetus was surely given to the growing attention the question of the authorship was receiving. I was glad my opposition to the trial did not prevail. (Though David Lloyd Kreeger, who engineered it, was as glum as I when, in advance of it, we read Boyle's outrageous brief together at his house.) Justices Blackmun and Stevens were steered in Oxford's direction, the latter to write a brilliant article on the controversy. The major article in *The New Yorker* by James Lardner was a milestone in our progress.

Charlton Ogburn, Jr.,  
Beaufort, S.C.  
7 November 1997

To the Editor:

Congratulations on the excellent format and editorial work in the *Newsletter*, and especially on its coverage of the 1987 Moot Court and Conference. Some correctives are in order, however, on my position on the "Ashbourne" portrait and on Charlton Ogburn's remarks about it in the Summer 1996 issue. Almost the full story of the Folger's part in the controversy was told in an article I wrote for the Summer 1979 issue of the Society's *Newsletter* and in Charlton's editorial remarks in the following Fall issue.

First, the Folger Library did not submit the portrait to Peter Michaels (a well-known conservator who had been the guest speaker at our first conference in 1976) "at the request of the ... Society" (although such a collaboration had been planned). And the conservator did not employ "more up-to-date" techniques than those available to Barrell.

What happened was that the Folger planned to take the "Ashbourne" on tour, and gave it to Michaels to clean. And in the cleaning some of the overpainting came off. What was revealed in the process was part of a coat-of-arms (Michaels's line drawing of the portion he first uncovered is shown in the Summer 1979 *Newsletter*) and the last number in the date—originally reading "1612," which was made to read "1611," and thus conforming to Stratford Will's "Aetatis suae 47." If the sitter was aged 47 in 1612, he would have been born in 1565. My late wife's and the Folger's research both showed that the coat-of-arms belonged to Sir Hugh Hammersly (later Lord Mayor of London), who was indeed born in 1565.

There can be no question, therefore, that the coat-of-arms is of the Hammersly family and that the device in no way resembles that of the Trenthams. The Folger Library (whose relationship under O.B. Hardison's direction with our Society was at an all-time high) reasonably concluded, as did Charlton and I, that the sitter was Hammersly. A line drawing of Sir Hugh that the Folger staff showed us certainly resembles the Michaels-uncovered "Ashbourne." (The Folger made no announcement of these discoveries, and graciously referred all inquiries to the Society.)



But in view of the near "mathematical concordance" of the Ashbourne and Welbeck Oxford portraits we noted in 1979, is it possible that the sitter was originally Oxford, and that the painting had been cobbled into a portrait of Hammersly before being overpainted into a likeness of "Shakespeare?" Yes, it is remotely possible. Since Oxford's reputation at that time was low ("in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes") paintings of his would be of lesser value, and members of the lower "squirearchy" such as Hammersly might well have tried to economize. Of course, if the sitter could be shown to have been Oxford, the "mathematical concordance" of two different painters' portrayal of the same subject would still be a problematic coincidence.

Is it likely that this is the "lost Cornelius Ketel portrait" (as I am wrongly made to contend in the Moot Trial article)? Not at all. A foremost "Ketel specialist," Wolf Stechow (who, in yet another bizarre coincidence in a story of too many coincidences, was one of Peter Michaels's teachers at Oberlin!), gave the axe to that one. He wrote a letter to the *Shakespeare Fellowship Newsletter* (British), April 1941, congratulating Barrell on his identification of Oxford (which Stechow accepted, as did the Stratfordian O. J. Campbell), but doubting the attribution to Ketel on grounds of style, quality, and the fact that no painter would sign his initials (the "CK" that Barrell's X-rays picked up, but the Folger's didn't, and which Michaels couldn't find!) in the place Barrell found them (i.e., adjoining the shield). He also challenged Barrell's "CK" findings on the grounds that the monogram did not resemble any of the known Ketel "C.K.'s," which, however, did differ from each other. But Stechow held open the possibility that the "Ashbourne" was an inferior copy of a Ketel painting.

Who did the "Shakespeare" over-painting and when was it done? Circumstantial evidence points to the Reverend Clement Usill Kingston, Second Master at the Ashbourne Free Grammar School, as the forger, and the overpainting done at some time in the first half of the nineteenth century:

1. He is the first known witness to the "Ashbourne"—formerly known as the "Kingston" portrait—as a likeness

of "Shakespeare".

2. There is contemporary testimony that Kingston was a painter himself "for profit." (See M. H. Spielmann's article, reprinted in "Oxfordian Vistas" in Vol. II of R. L. Miller's edition of *Shakespeare Identified*, p.412.)

3. Although Michaels told me that there were several layers of over-painting, the only layers his cleaning took off were those retouches hiding the identification of the sitter: over-painting of the coat-of-arms, the date, and the fuller head of hair. This seems to indicate a later date for these particular retouches. The probable explanation for Michaels's failure to find the "CK" is that the forger—for some weird reason, perhaps to establish proprietorship?—put his own initials next to the shield, thought better of it, and painted them over, deciding after all to palm his purchase off as a "genuine Shakespeare portrait" of provably ancient vintage. Michaels's cleaning may have removed the monogram along with the over-painting. (See McHugh's letter cited in Fall 1979 *Newsletter*.)

4. No matter what the circumstances of Kingston's acquisition of this painting and the facts of his ownership and of his employment make Oxfordians' speculations about him buying it from the Trentham's heirs highly unlikely, it is difficult to believe that, in a time when there was a seller's market for alleged "genuine Shakespeare" pictures and a host of

Stratfordians eager to be duped, this could have been cobbled into "Shakespeare's" image before Kingston got his hands on it—especially at a price well below the 80 pounds he got for its sale to a "Mr. Harvard."

So what is the likely scenario here? Clement Kingston got his painting, as he said, "in a London shop," and was lucky to find a portrait of some insignificant gentleman of Jacobean times, at a low price, and which with very few changes could be passed off to some credulous Maecenas "for profit."

If it is not a portrait of Oxford, what value does the "Ashbourne" now have for Oxfordians? It has immense value to all anti-Stratfordians as yet one more example of the desperate attempts of Stratfordians through the ages to find the least crumb—portraits, autographed books, handwriting specimens—that would connect the Stratford maltster with the great literature he was fondly supposed to have written. The market for such relics only arose because Will's

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*Letters (Continued from page 25)*

documented record stubbornly belies any such connection. This hunger was eagerly fed by the Irelands, the Colliers, the Zinkes, Holders, and many more sordid toilers. Kingston's picture is a document in the history of the Shakespeare forgery industry—a thriving business even today.

As this long winded polemic implies, it was decidedly not my "concern" in 1987 that the Folger would not accept this fraud as the "lost Ketel" painting of Oxford. I fully support that opinion. My concern was then, and remains today, that the Oxfordians will continue to use this discredited prop as "evidence of authorship." In light of recent statements cited in the *Newsletter*, it appears my fears are well-grounded.

Gordon C. Cyr  
Baltimore, MD  
26 October 1997

To the Editor:

Although I agree with Elliott Stone's criticism that *Alias Shakespeare* is, at least for an experienced reader of Shakespeare, entirely unconvincing in making the case for Oxford's alleged homosexual affair with Southampton as the key to the political mystery of "Shakespeare," I must express my dismay over Stone's theory that Oxfordians should be classified as either journalists or scholars. This convenient division is a prelude to intellectual conquest by the very forces of nonsense against which the Oxford movement should, in my opinion, define itself. What the movement needs, in my view, even more than scholarly research, is committed and skilled storytellers.

The common quality of all Stratfordian discourse is that it fails to pass the test of elementary plausibility as effective storytelling. To the extent that it endorses biographical presumption, it is often bad scholarship; at the same time, it utterly fails to inspire public confidence as biographical narrative. Perhaps this is why belief in the Stratford man as author is taken seriously only within a rather small and intellectually inbred academic niche.

Oxfordians, on the other hand, have the

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## The Blue Boar

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*The Anglican Shakespeare: Elizabethan Orthodoxy in the Great Histories.* By Prof. Daniel L. Wright. Item SP11. \$19.95

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*Letters (Continued from page 26)*

raw ingredients for a story, or perhaps a number of stories, which can and do appeal to a broad spectrum of readers. When such "stories" are told in an academic context they will and should employ all the modes of reasoning and presentation peculiar to such an environment. Others, like Sobran's book, will primarily be oriented towards finding a larger, popular audience for ideas originally discovered and promoted by the "scholars." Still other Oxfordian stories may be primarily artistic in conception and intent. If Stone's antithesis has any significance at all for us, it is that Oxfordian journalists must learn to think like scholars, and Oxfordian scholars must learn to write like journalists.

Despite its failings, I believe that Sobran's *Alias Shakespeare* is the best and most significant contribution to such a dialogue in recent years; it ought not to be ignored or disparaged for ulterior reasons.

Sincerely,

Roger Stritmatter  
Northampton MA  
31 September 1997

## To the Editor:

The *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* is really exciting to read these days (as is the *Elizabethan Review*) and I look forward to receiving them. I think the editors of these publications need a great deal of praise.

My purpose in writing this letter is to tell you about a friend of mine, Louis Klomp. He had not heard about the authorship problem before he came to my house recently and saw posters and many books on Shakespeare, and inquired about my interest.

I lent him Richard Whalen's book (*Shakespeare: Who Was He?*) and gave him copies of articles from the *Newsletter* and *Elizabethan Review* which describe the recent upsurge of interest in Europe and elsewhere.

When he returned these documents I was amazed to be presented with an acrostic poem on Edward de Vere, with a short note saying he was convinced. I think this poem deserves to be printed in the *Newsletter*.

Eileen Duffin  
London, Ontario, Canada  
25 August 1997

(We agree, and so here follows Mr. Klomp's acrostic poem on Edward de Vere. Ed.)

Ere the immortal Bard of Avon  
Drew in his bearing breath  
Was William Shake-speares' lineage-  
dom

At rest two years in death  
Receivership of title bore  
Designs predestined to  
Disclosure of his work, no more  
Escape within revue  
Verification of authorship  
Equivocal with reason  
Reprieve from royal censorship  
Evasionary treason  
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Edward de Vere  
Antithesis to the man from Stratford  
Redefines Shake-speare  
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Offers from the heart  
Forever captured in repose  
Ornament to an art  
Xenolithic mystery?  
Fiduciarily wise?  
Objective anonymity?  
Resentment under guise?  
Doubt not.

Louis Klomp  
20 August 1997

## Join the Shakespeare Oxford Society

If this newsletter has found its way into your hands, and you're not already a member of the Society, why not consider joining us in this intriguing, exciting adventure in search of the true story behind the Shakespeare mystery? While the Shakespeare Oxford Society is certainly committed to the proposition that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, is the true Shakespeare, there is much that remains to be learned about the whole secretive world of Elizabethan politics and about how the Shakespeare authorship ruse came into being, and even more importantly, what it means for us today in the 20th Century as we complete our fourth century of living in a Western World that was created during the Elizabethan era.

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*Sherman (Continued from page 7)*

even look at things from this perspective, and prefers instead to work traditionally from the ground, in the painstaking fashion that is dictated by his profession, with “documentary evidence” which naturally conforms to the current paradigm. Oxfordians tend to see his work as self-confirming—despite the fact that he is the only died-in-the-wool traditional academic who has agreed to meet us on our own terms and challenge our assumptions. For this, I am enormously grateful. Alan has boldly entered the lions’ den without displaying contempt or condescension to us. And for some curious reason that I cannot fathom, he seems to enjoy our company!

Fortunately, every time Alan engages us on this subject, Oxfordians win. Not on the technical details, where he shows his strength, but on the larger logical questions, such as those brought up by Joe. Oxfordians win because Stratfordians can’t effectively answer these points. And, each time we are given more attention, more credibility and more publicity—and much of this is from Alan’s stature in the establishment. I’m not afraid to tell him this in public because I know he is into this too far. He knows too little not to continue, and too much to ever turn back.

But back to our dilemma. We have a situation of cognitive dissonance where neither Alan or Joe are hearing each other. It’s as if Joe was asking Alan to get into the high altitude jet and take a look at the problem at 25,000 feet. Alan is asking Joe to dig in the archeological dust of documentary evidence to see what treasures it may produce. If we are to make progress on this issue in the outside world, both sides need to merge. Oxfordians need to be able to assimilate the legitimate evidence Alan is presenting and be willing to modify our understanding, or theory, of the authorship question. We can only hope he and other Stratfordians will do the same.

Right now, the only clear and concise theory that we can present with any effectiveness is the macro view that Oxford wrote Shakespeare and that William Shaxper did not. We continue to have problems with dealing with Shaxper as a real, bona-fide person in this period as he is viewed by 98% of the establishment. We don’t do a very good job of explaining to the public how the cover-up was so successful, who was in the know and who wasn’t, and what was the exact relationship between Oxford and Shaxper—two men who clearly co-existed in the same town at the same time. In short, we have failed

to clearly explain how Oxford came to write the plays and deliberately and successfully shifted the credit of authorship to William Shaxper. And until we do clearly and concisely explain this mystery, we will never persuade the academic establishment or the public at large of our mission.

In a sense, then, we stand on the threshold of a dream. Every great enterprise first began as an idea or a dream, yet most dreams never become reality because they lack a clear and well-defined plan of implementation. We are now developing such a plan, but to achieve it will take more than my will alone—the cause must also be in *your* will. Our cause will take many long hours of dedication, sacrifice and patience, but the reward will also be great, sublime and transformational. And Elizabethan literature, history, biography, the monarchy and even England itself, will never be the same.

I have heard many people despair at the task of changing Elizabethan history as too difficult, too overwhelming, and too futile. And that as individuals we are so small and insignificant. I can only answer with the Biblical reply that was given to me long ago, “To those whom so much has been given, so much more is expected.” Press on, press on.

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