

we are going. This book supplies a history filled with anecdotes and insights which in turn inspire a certain confidence about what has been experienced and accomplished by Oxfordians that is good for the soul. The recent news about Supreme Court Justices Stevens and Scalia in the *Wall St. Journal* of April 17, 2009 is enough to start thinking about a third edition. The authors and their publisher might consider that this very helpful resource should be updated more often than every 17 years.

In any event, the authors should be forgiven for their sense of frustration that the authorship controversy hasn't progressed farther than it has in that period of time. In the preface to the new edition, they write, "The controversy seems to be moving less to a clearcut resolution than to a general acceptance of the legitimacy of the scholarly pursuit of the question," and reference the successful Declaration of Reasonable Doubt. I beg to differ. First of all is the huge increase in circumstantial evidence brought to light over that period of time. Even more, given the size and the intransigence of the opposition, Oxfordians have made amazing strides in advancing their case, the recognition of the legitimacy of the issue chief among them. We have to believe that the headlines announcing Justice Stevens' and Scalia's decision favoring the Earl of Oxford are only symptomatic of the cracks developing in the Stratfordian position. Forgive me for believing that the third edition of this book will have much to report.

***The Muse as Therapist: A New Poetic Paradigm for
Psychotherapy***

by Heward Wilkinson,

London: Karnac Books. xxxii+258 pages. £20.99.

Reviewed by Richard M. Waugaman, M.D.

Heward Wilkinson is a British psychotherapist who has written an intriguing book, subtitled "A New Poetic Paradigm for Psychotherapy." Why am I reviewing it for this journal? Because in his longest chapter, which Wilkinson calls "the passionate centre of the book," he argues that Edward de Vere was the concealed author of the works of Shakespeare. He admits that de Vere's "powerful poetic ghost has... taken over the organizational energy of [this] book" (xvi). I will return to his chapter on de Vere shortly. First, I need to tell you more about the book, so you will understand why de Vere enjoys pride of place in it.

Wilkinson worries that the profession of psychotherapy suffers from excessive medicalization, as illustrated by the current infatuation with neuroscience on the part of many psychoanalysts. He therefore wants to demonstrate that the arts are equally fundamental to our understanding of the process of psychotherapy. I strongly agree with him on this score. He chooses poetry among the arts as "most accessible" to the argument he

wishes to make (2). He acknowledges the existence of the specialized field of “poetry therapy,” which uses reading and writing poetry as a form of therapy. His focus is more theoretical, and is ambitious in its scope. He argues that all psychotherapy shares crucial features of poetry—they both deal with what is “pre-communicable”; they both exist within a “relational field”; and “both have a potentially infinite dimension of cross-referential meaning” (2-3). Further, “poetry is a form of psychotherapy” (xxxii). Marvin Bennett Krims has recently argued that reading Shakespeare, in particular, is therapeutic for him, and can be for others as well.¹

Wilkinson makes the central point that poetry can be the most natural expression of intense emotions. He cites studies that show that “survivors of extreme experiences resort to poetry... when seeking to express themselves” (xxxii). Around the 4th century B.C.E., the Sanskrit epic *Ramayana* presented a myth about the birth of poetry. Allegedly, it arose spontaneously when Valmiki (the author of the epic) was overcome with pity, and noticed that he began speaking in verse. He then observed, “the utterance that I produced in this access of *shoka*, grief, shall be called *shloka*, poetry” (47).² Similarly, commoners in Shakespeare’s plays who normally speak in prose shift to verse when they are in the throes of love.³ More recently, Howard Shevrin explained why he chose to write his novel about psychoanalysis in verse⁴—“How else but in verse to capture the paradox of these seeming antinomies, the simultaneous presence of the sound *with* its echo, the light *in* its shadow, the voice *of* the silence? Psychoanalytic discourse is to ordinary discourse as metaphor is to prosaic speech. It thickens ordinary meaning by its very form... Only verse can provide these resources” (xii).

Now for Wilkinson’s Chapter Four, which is titled, “Reality, Existence, and the Shakespeare Authorship Question: *King Lear*, *Little Dorrit*, and the Man Who Was Shakespeare.” It refers repeatedly to the theme of penitence (149-151). Wilkinson intriguingly speculates that one of de Vere’s several motives for concealing his authorship may have been penitential. In his extensive discussion of *King Lear*,⁵ he views Edgar as representing the author—“The abyss of Edgar’s descent—symbolizes the depth of the author’s self-imposed penitence—yet apotheosis of that penitence...” (151). De Vere in fact marked two of the seven “penitential” psalms in his Bible—Psalms 6 and 51. These two psalms are the sources of recently discovered, abundant allusions in the works of Shakespeare.⁶

As with any book, there are some weaknesses.⁷ Wilkinson discusses philosophy a great deal, and Kant in particular. Sadly, Kant’s legacy includes his horrendous writing style. It has led many serious thinkers to confuse obfuscation with profundity. Rather than burden us with the unusual request that we read his book twice (xvii), Wilkinson might have edited his prose more carefully. Literary studies suffer from related problems of opaque writing style, so it is unfair to make too much of this—especially when we are indebted to Wilkinson for educating his readers about the exciting implications of realizing the works of Shakespeare were in fact written by Edward de Vere.

Endnotes

¹ Marvin Bennett Krims, *The Mind According to Shakespeare: Psychoanalysis in the Bard’s Writing*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006.

² Valmiki, *Ramayana, Book One*. Robert P. Goldman (translator). New York: New York University Press, 2005.

³ Gary Logan, personal communication, November 20, 2008.

- ⁴ Howard Shevrin, *Dream Interpreters: A Psychoanalytic Novel in Verse*. Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 2003.
- ⁵ His Oxfordian interpretation of the play echoes that of William Farina, but he does not cite his book, *De Vere as Shakespeare: An Oxfordian Reading of the Canon*, London: McFarland, 2006.
- ⁶ For some examples, see R. M. Waugaman, "The Sternhold and Hopkins' Psalter is a Major Source for Shakespeare," *Notes & Queries* (in press).
- ⁷ Another stylistic distraction is Wilkson's use of machine-gun bursts of exclamation points. In a single parenthetical remark, he uses three exclamation points.

Der Mann, der Shakespeare erfand
(The Man who Invented Shakespeare)

By Kurt Kreiler

Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 2009

595 pages. 28 illustrations in color

Reviewed by Walter Klier

Walter Klier, author, journalist, and painter, lives in Innsbruck, Austria. In 1994 he published "Das Shakespeare-Komplott" (The Shakespeare Conspiracy), an essay on the authorship controversy which managed to rekindle the discussion on this topic in the German-speaking countries. It was re-published in 2004 as "Der Fall Shakespeare" (The Shakespeare Case). His latest published work is the novel "Leutnant Pepi zieht in den Krieg" (Lieutenant Pepi Goes to War, 2008).

For a long time the world has preferred to stare at the Stratford bust with wide-open eyes and create tales that afterwards are christened "biographies." In this mood Kurt Kreiler begins the foreword of his voluminous rendering of the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

The book contains 22 chapters followed by an epilogue containing a brief sketch of the history of the doubters and also the doubters-of-the-doubters, a new species that is coming more and more into vogue. Each chapter is preceded by a "scenic" prelude of 1-3 pages, in some cases a blend of source material and literary narration. These short scenes lend sound and color to the whole: they are printed in italics and thus segregated from the strictly documentary part.

This book has many merits; one is to present, for the first time in German, a host of archival documents, many of them unlikely ever to have been heard of or to have been seen by any German reader – a veritable *tour de force*. One has only to think of the often obscurely oblique language of the pamphlets exchanged in the Gabriel Harvey-Thomas Nashe quarrel, dealt with in chapters 18 and 19, and to which,