

## Chapter 1 : Shakespeare Authorship Question on Wikipedia

*The Shakespeare authorship question is the argument that someone other than William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon wrote the works attributed to him.*

However, many Oxfordians believe that the monument originally depicted Shakespeare holding a sack, and that it was subsequently altered to depict him as a writer. However, the evidence is overwhelmingly against the Oxfordian scenario. In , Lillian Schwartz tried to put a scientific gloss on such speculations when she wrote an article for Scientific American which used computer modelling to suggest that the Droeshout portrait is actually of Queen Elizabeth. However, as Steven May points out in his essay , "the alleged code, handy and time-honored as it has become, does not square with the evidence. May does concede that there was for a time a "stigma of verse" among the early Tudor aristocrats, "but even this inhibition dissolved during the reign of Elizabeth until anyone, of whatever exalted standing in society, might issue a sonnet or play without fear of losing status. They darkly hint that this is evidence of a coverup, and have even gone so far as to x-ray the Shakespeare monument in Stratford because of a suspicion that the manuscripts may have been hidden inside. This evidence, which cuts across handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, imagery, and more, has persuaded many Shakespeare scholars, but is generally ignored or ridiculed by antistratfordians because accepting it would be a crippling blow for their theories. Oxford the Poet The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford was a recognized poet in his own day, and Oxfordians make the most of this fact in their attempts to prove that he actually wrote the works of Shakespeare. However, most Oxfordian work in this area involves highly selective use of evidence, and often reveals a distressing lack of knowledge about Elizabethan poetry in general. Puttenham on Oxford If Oxford did indeed write the works of Shakespeare, why did he never acknowledge them? Oxfordians claim that the works contain dangerous political allegories, and that Oxford could not safely allow them to appear under his own name. Hence, he used the name "Shakespeare. This case study of the Oxfordian misuse of evidence was written by Terry Ross; it appeared on the humanities. We have made available the texts of the Response from Frontline -- and a Reply. Joseph Sobran has recently gone further, claiming that the verbal parallels he has found constitute proof that the poetry of Oxford and Shakespeare were written by the same person. Was the Earl of Oxford the True Shakespeare? Thomas Looney onward have noted that some of the verse forms used by Oxford were also used by Shakespeare, and they have seized upon this coincidence as support for their theories. Some of these myths have been repeated and handed down from Oxfordian to Oxfordian for decades, without any attempt being made to verify them. Here are three essays, each exposing an Oxfordian myth and demonstrating that the Oxfordian faith in them has been misplaced. From this, Oxfordians have decided that Benson must not have thought that Shakespeare was really Shakespeare. Moreover, Benson nowhere expresses any doubt that the author of the poems was the William Shakespeare whose plays were collected in the First Folio and who died in April of He also outlines a fifty year history of Oxfordians parroting and even embellishing the myth without their ever checking to see whether it was true. The Oxfordian film Anonymous On October 28, , the movie Anonymous opened; it flopped at the box office, but there was considerable discussion of the film at the time. William Shakespeare is a character in the movie, but the central character is Edward de Vere, the 17th earl of Oxford, who is, among other things, the son of Queen Elizabeth, the lover of the same Queen Elizabeth some years later , and the real author of the works commonly attributed to William Shakespeare. The film is NOT meant to be a comedy. There is, of course, no reason to credit the earl with even one line of any work that has traditionally been attributed to William Shakespeare for more information about this matter, please see the essays on this site , but many entertaining movies have been based on historically dubious material. Here are a few links related to the film: Roland Emmerich is among those wrote letters in response to Shapiro. In addition to previews, trailers, commercials, press kits, blogs, and interviews, the film is also being promoted for its educational value. We are not making this up. An outfit called "Youth Marketing International" has prepared study guides for the movie that the producers hope will be used for high school and college courses. There is also a file explaining how seeing the movie and performing some classroom exercises can meet some educational standards. For a blogospherical

discussion of the study guides, see Attention Educators: Have We All Been Played? There will be more reviews when the movie goes into general release, but a showing at the Toronto Film Festival prompted this blog post by Holger Syme to which the screenwriter John Orloff responded. Simon Shama discussed the film for Newsweek: However, Ogburn has a distressing tendency to brush aside facts which he finds inconvenient, and to invent or distort other "facts" to suit his purpose; he employs a blatant double standard in evaluating evidence which makes his thesis unfalsifiable. Michell thinks that just about everybody ever proposed as a candidate for authorship had his oar in the Avon. Matus points out the weaknesses of the Oxfordian case, and also argues that the Oxfordian approach to the play seeks to diminish its power as a work of art, reducing a profound exploration of the deepest issues that concern us as people to a petty expression of pique. The Code That Failed: Testing a Bacon-Shakespeare Cipher Until the s, Francis Bacon was the favorite candidate of those who doubted that Shakespeare wrote the plays and poems that have been attributed to him. The Oxford faction is today the more numerous, but there are still Baconians around. A number of candidates were proposed as the real author of the Funeral Elegy, including George Chapman, an unnamed member of "a stable of elegy writers", a country parson, Simon Wastell, Sir William Strode, William Sclater, and the 17th Earl of Oxford. John Ford was first suggested in by Richard J. Kennedy on Shaksper, but it was not until that the case for Ford was generally considered to be stronger than the case for Shakespeare. Monsarrat "A Funeral Elegy: Brian Vickers, Counterfeiting Shakespeare:

*The Shakespearean Authorship Trust is a registered charity dedicated to discovering the truth about the authorship of the works we know as William Shakespeare's.*

These cults have all the fervor of religion , and indeed, the whole movement is permeated with emotion that sweeps aside the intellectual appraisal of facts , chronology , and the laws of evidence. The disciples of the cults, like certain other fanatic sectarians, rail on disbelievers and condemn other cultists as fools and knaves. They have discovered "truth" according to their lights, and they are angry and unhappy when the world refuses to embrace it. Wright, on anti-Stratfordianism [7] The most common crank reason given for doubting the sole author hypothesis is the allegation that Shakespeare was an illiterate rustic and rapacious hustler devoid of both the necessary knowledge and poetic sensibility shown in the works. Hardly any professional scholar takes these theories seriously. In bypassing academia, they hope to argue their case directly before a broad public that knows little of Shakespeare, Elizabethan history and the standard methodologies of scholarly research. Aside from self-promoting mania, snobbery and a concomitant contempt for an underclass and the provincial world play a significant, perhaps, seminal role in the rhetoric of doubting the historical record that the son of a provincial whittawer, or dresser of animal skins, raised in a minor country town was able to rise to fortune, and earn posthumous fame as the greatest writer in the English language. It was this absurd celebration of gifts of erudition imputed to him by adulators which began to prompt scepticism and generate iconoclasm. The assumption was adopted, then turned on its head. Since Shakespeare lovers concurred on his comprehensive erudition, the discrepancy between this contrived image and the facts of his relatively unschooled origins stood out in stark relief. It required little to take the next step and conclude that, since omniscience and an illiterate background were incompatible, only someone with an aristocratic culture and upbringing could have written the works. While authors like their privacy , often burning or destroying the evidence regarding their extra-literary existence e. Thomas Hardy , readers tend to hunger for intimate details of the real life of an author they admire. This overreaching of the available evidence afflicts both mainstream scholarship and authorship sceptics. It includes claimed doubters from the past e. Oxford has remained the reigning alternative candidate for the last 90 years. They also note his long-term, if often vexatious, relationships with Queen Elizabeth I and the Earl of Southampton, his intimate knowledge of court life, his aristocratic education and cultural achievements. Macbeth is sometimes considered to contain references to the Gunpowder Plot of , such as the mentions of equivocation in 2. Oxford was himself a published poet, publishing occasional verse under his own name, literary dedications, and contributing to anthologies of courtly poets such as *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, In addition to some factual errors [31] , the film also presents rather creative reinterpretations of the historical figures. Shakespeare is a ribald and licentious drunk who murdered Christopher Marlowe when he found out "the truth," De Vere is a revolutionary in the field of theater , and a key plot point is that, spoiler alert, Edward De Vere is one of many bastard children of Queen Elizabeth I [32] , to the point that she loses track of them all and ugh has sex with and is impregnated by De Vere. See the main article on this topic: Francis Bacon The leading candidate of the 19th century, and the first alternative candidate to be proposed, was Sir Francis Bacon, a major scientist, philosopher , courtier, diplomat , essayist, historian and successful politician , who served as Solicitor General , Attorney General and Lord Chancellor Supporters of the theory, known as Baconians, note that Bacon concluded a letter with the words "so desiring you to be good to concealed poets", [34] which supporters consider a confession. The hypothesis itself was formally presented by William Henry Smith in , and was expanded the following year by both Smith and Delia Bacon no relation, she was just fascinated by their shared surname in the midth century. Then he escaped to live in Italy because Experts had long suspected the two may have collaborated prior to this analysis but this merely confirmed it. In fact, the next version of *New Oxford Shakespeare* will officially credit him with a byline. Queen Elizabeth I[ edit ] She was perhaps unable to release works under her own name because of her position and gender , except that she did write some mediocre poems. She was commonly acknowledged at the time as a rather popular writer, but only of learned translations from the French and Latin. The thought of her writing the

extended praise of her own birth and rule that occurs in the late-career Henry VIII does hold a certain charm. According to the traditional attribution, the writer is identified as William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon by at least four pieces of contemporary evidence that firmly link the two: Linguistic evidence[ edit ] For example, Shakespeare was raised in the West Midlands, and some scholars have proposed that he wrote in that dialect. At this time, West Midlanders were the first to begin using the verb "do" as an auxiliary in their sentences "Except, O signieur, thou do give to me egregious ransom. Evidence of Shakespeare as playwright[ edit ] The most prominent piece of evidence, of course, is that a big bunch of plays and sonnets were performed and published under his name, over the course of many years, and in collaboration with many people. Andrewe Wyse, William Aspley, " entred for their copies, vnder the handes of the wardens, twoo bookes, the one called Muche ado about Nothings, thother the second parte of the history of Kinge Henry the iiii. Busby, " entred for their copie, vnder thandes of Sir Geo. Buck, knight, and thwardens, a book called Mr. Stephans night at Christmas last, by his maiesties servantes playinge vsually at the globe on the Banksyde. Payver, " entered for his copie, vnder the handes of Mr. Thorpe, " entred for his copie, vnder the handes of Mr. Lownes, warden, a Booke called Shakespeares sonnettes. William may have been the person who pressed the claim on behalf of his father. In , a juicy row broke out in the College of Arms when Ralph Brooke, a herald, contested several grants alleged to have been made to "base persons" by another herald, Sir Richard Dethick. Brooke accused his fellow herald of accepting bribes to bestow coats of arms on non-noble people. One such grant complained of was one to "Shakespeare the player". Acting and writing plays were servile trades beneath the dignity of a gentleman. The dispute, which became public, firmly identifies "Shakespeare the player" as the "gent. The play was drafted by several authors, and similar to modern script-doctoring, others were hired to add scenes throughout. Collaborations are known to be in the Shakespeare canon. According to Price, "there are two historical prototypes for this type of authorship fraud, that is, attributing a written work to a real person who was not the real author. And, told of this, he slights it. Fool, as if half eyes will not know a fleece From locks of wool, or shreds from the whole piece? There are some seventy extant documents that relate to Shakespeare of Stratford " yet if you ignore all those that refer to literary endeavors none of them have any connection to a literary career. What if he were a play broker who took credit for the works of others? Those who traded in plays, as in other commodities, were also brokers," ignoring the fact that no evidence of such play brokers exists. Price also says that Ben Jonson used both terms in the epigram, "On Poet-Ape", written between and which refers to the playwright John Marston, though anti-Stratfordians insist that it refers to Shakespeare for anti-Stratfordians, almost every word from every poet or playwright refers to Shakespeare; apparently his contemporaries were as obsessed by him as they are. Interestingly, though, this argument is never deployed against Ben Jonson, the son of a brick-maker who nonetheless managed to be the most popular playwright of his time and wrote the erudite *The Alchemist* and *Volpone* and went on to gain a high reputation for his command of classical literature. Jonson is a good example of how Elizabethan education differed from modern schooling. Similarly, the argument that one needed to be a courtier to write convincingly of court life is never used against John Webster, the son of a merchant tailor, who nonetheless managed to compose effective dialogues about Italian courtiers in his plays *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. It was unusual enough that someone like Robert Greene, who had an M. Anti-Stratfordians also assert that the upper-class characters are more fully fleshed, and seem to have a greater touch of realism about them, while the lower class characters are thinly drawn caricatures, with names such as Bullcalf, Bottom, Wart, or Shadow. In this argument, the lower classes are simpletons when solo or in small groups, but in large groups are portrayed as an angry or dangerous mob " a distinctly upper class viewpoint. This purely subjective view is opposed by Stratfordians and even those Anti-Stratfordians who argue for another lower-class author, such as Marlowe. In any case, both Shakespeare and Marlowe were from propertied middle-class backgrounds. Mysterious stoppage[ edit ] Oxfordians believe that contemporary documents imply the actual playwright was dead by , the year continuous publication of new Shakespeare plays "mysteriously stopped". *King Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra* were composed after Oxfordians argue that they could have been completed earlier, citing minority mainstream scholarship that has argued for that view about particular plays at various times. They also discover all sorts of other signs that Shakespeare was

dead, including mysterious references in poems and documents, though more mainstream scholars remain unimpressed.

**Chapter 3 : Shakespeare Authorship Question » Dean Keith Simonton, PhD**

*Irvin Leigh Matus's Shakespeare, In Fact (Continuum, ) is a good book-length examination of the authorship question, containing thorough demolitions of many Oxfordian claims. Even if you've read the book, check out Thomas A. Pendleton's review, which originally appeared in The Shakespeare Newsletter.*

At the beginning, I did not even know that any authorship controversy existed. So, how could I possibly use Stratfordian data? At first, I was not very concerned about this question. Almost all of my empirical studies did not require data contingent on the resolution of this controversy. As a psychologist who studies creative genius, my primary interest was aesthetic: Why are some plays or sonnets vastly superior in dramatic or poetic impact to other plays or sonnets? Hence, the author per se was irrelevant. Yet even this usage was noncommittal to the extent that the traditional chronology at least had the plays in roughly the correct order. Thus, the play chronology might be shifted backward by enough time or even squished or expanded to accommodate an alternative author without altering most of my empirical conclusions. The only genuine exception were those findings that concerned the relation between thematic content and concurrent political events Simonton, a. Then at the beginning of the 21st century I realized that if the true author turned out to be someone other than the traditional candidate, I could conduct some additional empirical studies that would remain impossible otherwise. These investigations would scrutinize the correlations between the life and the works. I had already much earlier examined how contemporary biographical events influenced the stylistic characteristics of compositions in the classical repertoire Simonton, d, a , including a study that concentrated on the compositions of Ludwig van Beethoven Simonton, a. The paucity of biographical information is one of the reasons why anti-Stratfordians have questioned his authorship. I was especially interested in the candidacy of Edward de Vere , the 17th Earl of Oxford, currently the most popular candidate and someone whose life is much better documented. However, such an inquiry could not begin without first determining a different chronology for the plays. Quite the contrary, with respect to ordering, different Oxfordian chronologies each agree more with the Stratfordian chronology than they do with each other Simonton, p. Apparently, each Oxfordian takes the traditional dates as the baseline against which to present his or her idiosyncratic dissent. Hence, I devised an objective and quantitative method to test alternative chronologies by assessing which of the rival datings established the strongest correspondence between conspicuous political events and thematic content dealing with the same or similar political events Simonton, p. Besides testing two alternative Oxfordian chronologies, I evaluated the Stratfordian chronology with different temporal shifts. To my surprise, the traditional chronology shifted just two years earlier provided the best fit, suggesting that it took an average of two years for the initial event-inspired idea to result in a finished play subsequent revisions presumably making minimal impressions on the linkages. Neither Oxfordian chronology provided any correspondences even when shifted forward and backward. Because this developmental tendency is specifically predicted by a major theory of artistic creativity, I had yet another reason for ruling Oxford out as a candidate. Lastly, because the career trajectory “the rise to a career peak and the gradual decline thereafter” was also found to agree with prior research and theory on creativity across the life span Simonton, a, c , the scientific arguments against his candidacy were threefold. Whoever actually wrote the plays, it was patent that the traditional chronology is approximately correct in both relative and absolute terms. More specifically, the following plays, in whole or in part, were most likely written after Oxford died: Given this empirical outcome, I then began a systematic search for some other candidate whose life would conform to the most plausible play chronology. In fact, I find the Stratfordian attribution far more plausible than the Oxfordian claim “quite contrary to the film Anonymous! The latter travesty presents an image of the much-maligned Stratford man totally inconsistent with the available facts. Roland Emmerich is neither scholar nor scientist but rather a filmmaker, and filmmakers alone enjoy artistic license. I realize that my tolerance of ambiguity concerning such an important question is not widely appreciated. The issue has become so highly polarized that it is often difficult if not impossible to carry out a calm discussion of the pros and cons regarding each candidate. In the latter case, it is actually considered advisable to entertain alternative

hypotheses, to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each explanation. In a true Baconian, inductive fashion, no established fact should be omitted from the empirical evaluation. Such an investigative strategy allows the researcher to avoid confirmation biases. In contrast, the majority of the participants in the debate assume advocacy positions from the start, like lawyers arguing their cases in court. Failure to resolve the authorship question more completely only denies me the raw data necessary to conduct one or two empirical inquiries. I will never be able to connect thematic content and perhaps poetic style to underlying biographical events.

**Chapter 4 : The Shakespearean Authorship Trust, who really wrote Shakespeare's plays?**

*The authorship question is therefore not just a matter of honoring the true author of the work - itself an important ethical obligation for readers - but also about restoring a sense of authenticity and truth to the work we study and enjoy under the name Shakespeare.*

But the policy page on its website marlowe-society. Five years ago, James Shapiro, an American academic teaching at Columbia university in New York took the international world of Shakespeare by storm with a brilliant idea, an intimate history of the playwright through the prism of a single year. When I reviewed the book I called it "an unforgettable illumination of a crucial moment in the life of our greatest writer". Then came the curse of the sequel. But no, it was not about or Apparently, Professor Shapiro had gone over to the dark side, the blasted heath of the authorship question. Even in his own time, Shakespeare drove people mad with his modest Stratford origins. In , rival dramatist Robert Greene made a deathbed attack on the "conceit" of the "upstart crow" from the provinces who considered himself "the onely Shake-scene". The explanation must be that Shakespeare was not original but an impostor "beautified with our feathers". Later generations went further. Unquestionably, said the "anti-Stratfordians", as they came to be known, the recorded life of the man called Shakespeare could not possibly yield the astonishing universality and dazzling invention of the canon. They had a point. All we know for certain is that Shaxpere, Shaxberd, or Shakespear, was born in Stratford in , that he was an actor whose name is printed, with the names of his fellow actors, in the collected edition of his plays in Into this vacuum, a bizarre fraternity, including Mark Twain, Charlie Chaplin, Orson Welles and Sigmund Freud, have projected a "Shakespeare" written by a more obviously accomplished writer: This is the delusional world that Shapiro has chosen to explore in Contested Will. He justifies his investigation with an assertion of scholarly daring "this subject remains virtually taboo in academic circles" and claims that his interest is less in what people think about the authorship question, more why they think it. The case for Marlowe is a largely American farrago of wishful thinking and speculative fantasy that is typically paranoid and often downright phoney. For the hierophants of the Marlowe Society , however, their playwright was not murdered in a Deptford tavern after a row about "the reckoning" the bill but spirited away to France through court connections Marlowe was a spy. There, for the next odd years, he wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare, smuggling them back to London through diplomatic channels. Only slightly less loopy is the theory that Francis Bacon is the true and secret hand behind the plays. The Baconians owe their ideas to the first of several conspiracy-minded Americans, a charismatic 19th-century bluestocking named Delia Bacon. Sir Francis Bacon had long been recognised as a Renaissance great: On a conventional analysis, as Shapiro makes clear, just about the only thing at which he did not try his hand were plays or poems. That was no problem for Delia Bacon. A close reading of Julius Caesar, King Lear and Coriolanus, she declared, revealed the collective effort of a "little clique of disappointed and defeated politicians" fighting a desperate covert battle against the "despotism" of Elizabeth and James I. Delia Bacon was a formidable advocate for her namesake. Of course no one individual could possibly have written the plays attributed to Shakespeare. He was little better than a "pet horse-boy at Blackfriars", "an old showman and hawker of plays", an out-and-out "stupid, illiterate, third-rate play actor". The catchy vehemence of her arguments eventually got debated by two riverboat pilots on the Mississippi, one of whom, Samuel Clemens, would become the most famous writer in the United States, Mark Twain. Those who are devoted to the belief that Edward de Vere is the real author of the canon have to swallow almost as much hocus pocus. This Oxford caucus derives a good deal of its confidence from the advocacy of Sigmund Freud. The Myth and the Reality. As well as marshalling the best evidence for Oxford, Ogburn arranged for his "case" to be formally tried by three US Supreme Court justices in September This stunt, which awkwardly went against Ogburn, persuaded the New York Times to ventilate the question, "Who wrote William Shakespeare? So what possessed Shapiro to undertake this wild goose chase? The Observer decided to put "Who wrote Shakespeare? First, I wanted to know if the "anti-Stratfordian" case had any artistic credibility. As a corollary, I asked: Who, from their experience, was Shakespeare? And finally, based on their intimate knowledge of the plays in performance, was there any

particular passage in which, intuitively, they felt that Shakespeare, the famously invisible author, revealed himself? I go to Shakespeare in performance almost every month, and the authentic singularity of his vision rarely fails to move and impress. What would the professionals say? My first meeting was with the former director of the Globe theatre, Mark Rylance, an actor who was once described by Al Pacino as playing Shakespeare "like Shakespeare wrote it for him the night before". Rylance, who wears two hats, actor and director, with Elizabethan ease, is a celebrated refusenik. He believes that the person he insists on calling "the Stratford man" was little more than a front for a powerful literary cabal that almost certainly included Bacon. A lot of other people were gathered around those plays. On closer examination, his belief in the Bacon theory is an assertion of the value of theatrical collaboration, against the tyranny of a single artistic source. Rylance, who has the ideas and demeanour of a countercultural guru from the 70s, finds "the idea of the single genius at work here very damaging to the confidence of younger playwrights". Rylance says he wants "the Stratford man" to be admired as a theatrical wrangler, a kind of super producer. He is publicly supported by Sir Derek Jacobi, and even Vanessa Redgrave who, in her recent Bafta speech hinted at a sympathy with the "anti-Stratfordian" position. Generally, when you approach the Shakespeare question with most contemporary directors the American conspiracies melt into thin air. Adrian Noble, who ran the Royal Shakespeare Company from to , declares that he is "a Stratfordian". Talking about the man, Noble struggles momentarily and then comes up with a formula for an explanation of the mystery that will recur in my later conversations. The idea that Bacon or some cabal wrote the plays is, on the basis of his experience, "utter nonsense. We know more than we think about Shakespeare. The more I work on him, the clearer his work becomes. For her, there is no other playwright to rival him. Not Euripides; not Chekhov. You feel as though you are being shadowed. He is primarily an academic for whom the "anti-Stratfordian" conspiracy theories have an abstract, theoretical appeal. Even the anti-Stratfordians must concede this point. Warwickshire words are scattered through his lines, like poppies in a wheat field. For Hall, there are two parts to any rebuttal of the anti-Stratfordians. You cannot, says Hall, mistake "the sheer bloody Englishness of the whole thing". When I ask him, "Who wrote William Shakespeare? Francis Bacon could no more have written Shakespeare than he could fly. His sympathy for, and understanding of, the basic passions of mankind is extraordinary. He launches into a passionate rebuttal, with reference to the First Folio of , a volume compiled by actors who had actually performed with Shakespeare, containing a foreword by Ben Jonson. Garrulous, argumentative, jealous, proud, and deeply committed to exposing hypocrisy and corruption. Not a man to kowtow to nobility or privilege. What does he do? As an example of how impossible it is to imagine Bacon or Oxford writing the plays, he alludes to the brilliant detail, from the history plays, of the nuisance problem of fleas breeding in the corners of taverns where men have been pissing. Nunn repeats the story of the RSC actor who encountered two Warwickshire rustics trimming stakes in a hedge. This, says Nunn, is a longstanding English problem: He is the greatest humanist who ever lived. No one understands forgiveness like Shakespeare.

**Chapter 5 : The Mystery of Shakespeare's Identity - TIME**

*The Shakespeare Authorship Coalition runs this website to introduce the Shakespeare authorship controversy, or Shakespeare authorship question, and let people sign the "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt About the Identity of William Shakespeare."*

Shapiro seemed to take great personal offense at the premise of our film; namely, that the works attributed to the actor William Shakespeare were in fact written by another man, Edward de Vere. Not only did the NY Times decline to allow me to fully respond, but Mr. I would, however, like to respond to two of his main issues in his opinion piece. I hate to use the word "lies," but children are, indeed, being taught at best a number of half-truths about William Shakespeare. For example, we all know Shakespeare famously only attended grammar school. But there is no record whatsoever of Shakespeare ever having attended any school. It is merely assumed he did-- he must have, since he wrote the plays, right? This might not be a lie, but it is not a fact. It is a guess. Another example from Mr. But many scholars date *The Tempest* to How do they date it? Do they have an original manuscript? No, because no such document has ever been found. Instead, they simply make a guess. But other scholars make other guesses. Shapiro, dated *The Tempest* fifteen years earlier, in But theater manager Philip Henslowe mentions in his diary a performance of a play called *King Leir* in note: Shapiro writes, than that obstacle is made only by Mr. It is however taught as fact. Interestingly, dates can work against Shakespeare as the true author. *Hamlet* is most often dated to But what to do with mentions of a play called *Hamlet* in , , and ? Well, according to Mr. Shapiro, they are all referring to a different play. And what is the evidence for such a conclusion? There is merely the conviction that it is inconceivable that Shakespeare wrote the greatest, most mature piece of dramatic writing in the English language at the age of Edward de Vere was 39 years old in On this complaint, Mr. Shapiro seems to be out of step with his colleagues. As all admirers of *Hamlet* know, Polonius is murdered in the play. Is that not a political act? Historically, however, Richard III did not have a hunchback. And then of course, there is *Richard II*, a play that the Earl of Essex famously had performed in order to incite a mob to aid him in his rebellion against the Queen. Can a play be more political? Shapiro need not defend William Shakespeare the man, but professional Shakespearean scholarship itself. Because once one begins to ask the tough questions, Shakespearean scholarship is revealed to be the very thing Shapiro claims to despise most: As the physicist Max Planck once said: Shapiro, I am not afraid of the next generation exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question and coming to their own conclusion -- whatever that may be.

## Chapter 6 : Shakespeare Authorship

*In September , the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition sponsored a "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt" to encourage new research into the question of Shakespeare's authorship, which has garnered more than 3, signatures, including more than academics.*

Tobacco Factory Theatre The Shakespeare Authorship Question There are many conspiracy theorists who believe that there was no playwright named William Shakespeare, but that Shakespeare was a nom de plume for an aristocrat who did not wish to be associated with theatre work. We know that he grew up in a sleepy community, had an unremarkable education and few experiences with the subjects written about in his plays. Coincidentally, Marlowe was stabbed to death in , just as William Shakespeare was becoming known as an actor and starting to write his first plays. Many people believe that Marlowe faked his death in order to avoid debtors. Still more intriguing is the theory that Marlowe was employed by Queen Elizabeth as a spy. In order to carry through with his espionage, his death was faked but he continued to write under the pen name of William Shakespeare. Francis Bacon Already a prolific writer under his own name, Bacon is often put forward as a candidate in the Shakespeare authorship debate. He was well educated and some references can be found in his work that may be clues or may just be coincidences. Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford The Earl spent his youth experimenting with writing but eventually stopped producing new work. He was a worldly man who understood the royal courts and politics and also spent time travelling. For example, his Guardian and mentor, William Cecil, was very similar to the character of Polonius in Hamlet. However Edward de Vere grew up in the English court, surrounded by well-known figures. William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby Like his father-in-law, Edward de Vere, William Stanley had the court connections that suggested familiarity with the nobles that were thought to be the basis of some Shakespearean characters. William Stanley shared initials and a first name with William Shakespeare. The writings of a sixteenth century Jesuit noted that Stanley was "busye in penning commodyes for the common players" and at the same time was financing two drama companies in London, suggesting that he was writing plays for the London Theatres. Elizabeth was undoubtedly one of the greatest minds of her time. She was well educated, highly literate and had a magnificent imagination. In her youth she was the subject of much intrigue and was the victim of jealousy, betrayal, espionage, and ill-fated love. Shakespeare himself came from a rustic community and has not been connected in his personal life to the experiences of the characters he wrote. The most obvious difficulty in accepting Elizabeth as the real Shakespeare is that she died thirteen years before the Bard and several of his greatest plays did not appear until after her death.

Chapter 7 : The Authorship Question from [blog.quintoapp.com](http://blog.quintoapp.com)

*Actor Keir Cutler, Ph.D., tells what changed his mind about Shakespeare's authorship, and why he signed the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt About the Identity of William Shakespeare.*

In the early 20th century, Walter Begley and Bertram G. This is taken to imply that he published under a pseudonym. Only the latter uses the name Labeo, so there is no link between Labeo and Bacon. The Envoy uses allegorical nicknames in praising several Elizabethan poets, among them "Adon". This is generally accepted to be an allusion to Shakespeare as the mythical Adonis from his poem Venus and Adonis. In the next stanzas, Edwards mentions a poet dressed "in purple robes", "whose power floweth far. He stated that Edwards is revealing that Adon Shakespeare is really the Earl of Oxford, forced by the Queen to use a pseudonym. Rubinstein argues that the same passage points to Sir Henry Neville. Oxfordian writers have found ciphers in the writings of Francis Meres. Such characters are taken as evidence that the London theatrical world knew Shakespeare was a mere front for an unnamed author whose identity could not be explicitly given. Baconians have argued that this depicts Bacon writing the plays bottom panel, giving them to a middle man, who passes them to Shakespeare the man holding a spear in the middle-left panel. The mainstream view is that it depicts encoded military instructions being passed on to soldiers. Visual imagery, including the Droeshout portrait has also been claimed to contain hidden messages. Especially note that the ear is a mask ear and stands out curiously; note also how distinct the line showing the edge of the mask appears. Shakespeare was written by one Mr. Finis, for I saw his name at the end of the book. An Historical Allegory by Herbert Lawrence, the narrator, "Common Sense", portrays Shakespeare as a thief who stole a commonplace book containing "an infinite variety of Modes and Forms to express all the different sentiments of the human mind" from his father, "Wit" and his half-brother, "Humour". He also stole a magical glass created by "Genius", which allowed him to "penetrate into the deep recesses of the Soul of Man". He recalls a previous pre-swinish incarnation in which he was a person called "Pimping Billy", who worked as a horse-holder at the playhouse with Shakespeare and was the real author of 5 of the plays. MS, Senate House Library, University of London In the early twentieth century a document since identified as a forgery appeared to demonstrate that a Warwickshire clergyman, James Wilmot, had been the earliest person to explicitly assert that Shakespeare was not the author of the canon. He was supposed to have reached this conclusion in after searching for documents concerning Shakespeare in Warwickshire. However, there is evidence that the manuscript linking Wilmot with the Baconian thesis supposedly a pair of lectures given by an acquaintance, James Corton Cowell, in was probably concocted in the early twentieth century. During the period, stage records suggest that Shakespeare, although always a major repertory author, was not as popular on the stage as were the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. In literary criticism he was nevertheless acknowledged as an untaught genius. In the 18th century, the works of Shakespeare dominated the London stage, and after the Licensing Act of , one fourth of the plays performed were by Shakespeare. Shakespeare was described as a genius who needed no learning, was deeply original, and unique in creating realistic and individual characters see Timeline of Shakespeare criticism. The phenomenon continued during the Romantic era, when Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, William Hazlitt, and others all described Shakespeare as a transcendent genius. In , Ralph Waldo Emerson expressed the underlying question in the air about Shakespeare with his confession, "The Egyptian [i. I can not marry this fact to his verse. Robertson, who wrote that "It is very doubtful whether the Baconian theory would ever have been framed had not the idolatrous Shakespeareans set up a visionary figure of the Master. Hart, who in published The Romance of Yachting, which for the first time asserted explicitly and unequivocally in print that Shakespeare did not write the works bearing his name. Hart claimed that Shakespeare was a "mere factotum of the theatre", a "vulgar and unlettered man" hired to add obscene jokes to the plays of other writers. Hart asserts that Shakespeare had been "dead for one hundred years and utterly forgotten" when old playscripts formerly owned by him were discovered and published under his name by Nicholas Rowe and Thomas Betterton. She discussed her theories with British scholars and writers. In the preface to a subsequent book, Bacon and Shakespeare: Later writers

such as Ignatius L. Donnelly portrayed Francis Bacon as the sole author. The Baconian movement attracted much attention and caught the public imagination for many years, mostly in America. Mrs Stopes concluded that there were fundamental differences, arguing that Bacon was not the author. A new twist was added in the writings of Orville Ward Owen and Elizabeth Wells Gallup, who claimed to have uncovered evidence that Francis Bacon was the secret son of Queen Elizabeth, who had been privately married to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The couple were also the parents of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. Encoded within his works was a secret history of the Tudor era. This tragic life-story was the secret hidden in the plays. This argument was taken up by several other writers, notably C. I do not seem to have any patience with the Shaksper argument: The Shaksper case is about closed. Greenstreet identified a pair of letters by the Jesuit spy George Fenner in which he reported that William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby was "busy penning plays for the common players. He believed that Derby was the principal figure behind the Shakespeare plays and was the sole author of the sonnets and narrative poems. He concludes that "William Stanley was William Shakespeare". Zeigler in the foreword and notes to his novel, *It Was Marlowe: A Story of the Secret of Three Centuries*. Mendenhall who, in February, wrote an article based upon his own stylometric work titled "Did Marlowe write Shakespeare? German literary critic Karl Bleibtreu supported the nomination of Rutland as sole author of the canon in, after an earlier critic had suggested that he may have written the comedies. The Rutlandite position was revived by Ilya Gililov in the 21st century. Throughout his numerous books on the authorship question, Greenwood limited himself to arguing against the traditional attribution, without supporting any alternative candidate. Mencken wrote a withering review of the work, concluding that it makes sorry reading for those who revered Twain. Marlowe re-examined[ edit ] Marlowe kills "Francis Frazer" in a duel, before exchanging identity with him. Illustration to Wilbur G. Marlowe continues to attract supporters, and in, the Australian documentary film maker Michael Rubbo released the TV film *Much Ado About Something*, which explores the subject in some detail. It has played a significant part in bringing the Marlovian theory to the attention of the greater public. The theory gained several notable advocates, including Sigmund Freud. The sonnets told the story of this affair and were addressed to the Earl, covertly revealing that he was the heir to the throne. By the early 20th century, the public had tired of cryptogram-hunting, and the Baconian movement faded, though its remnants remain to this day. The result was increased interest in Derby and Oxford as alternative candidates. New candidates are regularly put forward, such as Mary Sidney proposed in, Edward Dyer proposed in, William Nugent proposed in and Henry Neville proposed in. Some candidates have been promoted by single authors, others have gathered several published supporters. To the question "Do you think there is good reason to question whether William Shakespeare of Stratford is the principal author of the plays and poems in the canon? Some suggestions do not necessarily imply a secret author, but an alternative life-history for Shakespeare himself. These overlap with or merge into alternative-author models. An example is the claim that he was an Arab whose real name was "Sheikh Zubayr". This was first proposed in the 19th century as a joke by Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, but developed seriously by Iraqi writer Safa Khulusi in the s. Such claims for a non-English origin for Shakespeare were linked to the expansion of his influence and popularity globally. Claimants have been detected in other countries, and he has even figured as a "contested heirloom", appropriated to various competing national or ethnic identities. His Englishness was first disputed in the wake of the Romantic "Shakespeare mania" *Shakespearomanie* that swept Germany, and led to assertions of his Nordic character, [79] and to claims that he was essentially German. Instead Shakespeare of Stratford himself was identified as racially and culturally Germanic. The claim that Shakespeare was German was particularly stressed during World War I, and was later ridiculed in British propaganda. The meme resurfaced in anti-Nazi propaganda later. Thomas Fingal Healy, writing for *The American Mercury* in, picked up the idea, claiming that many of the plays draw on Irish folklore. Shakespeare was forced to conceal his Irish background because the Irish were considered a "rebel race" by Queen Elizabeth. Healy found numerous references in the text of *Hamlet* to clothes which, he thought, showed that the Dane was based on a legendary Irish tailor called Howndale. On the basis of a suggestion by a Professor Gentilli of Nervi, Freud came to suspect that Shakespeare was of French descent, and his name a corruption of "Jacques Pierre". Paladino claimed that Florio came from a Calvinist family in

Sicily. In his later writings he argued that Michelangelo Florio wrote the works in Italian, and his son John rendered them into English. Nevertheless, he was able to deduce from ciphers hidden in the plays that the true author was the illegitimate child of an Italian aristocrat "sprung basely from noble Italian blood" , and educated in Florence. He then moved to England where he became a tutor in Greek, mathematics, music, and languages, before becoming a playwright. Greenblatt objected to this as a tendentious rhetorical trick. Or as he put it in a letter to *The Times* then: Reply by William Jaggard, March 3, p. It was contained in a "thin quarto volume" donated by the widow of Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence "to the University of London in 1793". The manuscript was considered authentic by later Shakespeare scholars, but it was challenged by authorship doubter Daniel Wright based on research by John Rollet, who asserted that no records exist of Cowell, nor of the Ipswich Philosophic Society at this date. Wright and Rollet suggested that the manuscript may have been forged by a Bacon supporter and added to the Durning-Lawrence archive in the 18th century. Shapiro has since provided linguistic evidence of forgery as well. In the Danish critic Georg Brandes fulminated against the "troop of half-educated people" who believed that Shakespeare did not write the plays, and bemoaned the fate of the profession.

### Chapter 8 : Welcome | Shakespeare Authorship Coalition at [blog.quintoapp.com](http://blog.quintoapp.com)

*The Shakespeare Authorship Question* Oleg Seletsky · Tiger Huang · William Henderson-Frost Dartmouth College December 12, Abstract Many in academic world accept as fact that William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon was the pen.

Gender, Shakespeare, and Authorship. For more details see our conference page. On Sunday September 16th at 2. Proceeds to charity including The Shakespearean Authorship Trust. For more details and to book tickets, visit Shakespeare Weekend. April Brunel University hosts Shakespeare Week From 23 - 26 April, Brunel University will be hosting Shakespeare Week, a series of events dedicated to Shakespeare and focused on the authorship question. For more details and to book tickets, visit Shakespeare week. March 21 New Book: The book is available on Amazon or can be ordered through you local library or bookshop. The course is launched on the Coursera platform, which has 26 million registered users. The four-week course, which focuses on the central question of whether the traditionally ascribed author wrote the works of Shakespeare, is completely free and globally accessible. The course will have a rolling registration, meaning that students can register to take it at any time. It also features readings of key texts by Mark Rylance and other notable Shakespearean actors. Buy tickets at Who Wrote Shakespeare? To get authorship question news, including news about our conferences and the publication of our conference videos, follow us on ShakeAuthTrust. October 20 Booking Opens for Conference Today, booking opens for our annual conference. Our international guest this year is Canadian author and actor Keir Cutler. Read the article here. It is a fascinating collection that contains cutting-edge studies from across the Shakespeare scholarship community and is a landmark publication that sets authorship studies at the very centre of Shakespearean criticism. As such, it is book suitable for all lovers of Shakespeare, no matter who they believe him to be. The article had 12, hits within the first 24 hours. The Vampire we Desire, the Shakespeare we Reject" is about a number of things, including the Shakespeare authorship question. It is available on open access here: The Evidence" , Professor Alan H. Registered charity number

**Chapter 9 : Shakespeare authorship question - Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**

*This week is a practical introduction to the Shakespeare authorship question, covering terms and concepts you will use and outlining the basic arguments for and against William Shakespeare's authorship of the works attributed to him.*

His surname was spelled inconsistently in both literary and non-literary documents, with the most variation observed in those that were written by hand. This hyphen use is construed to indicate a pseudonym. Aristocrats such as Derby and Oxford supposedly used pseudonyms because of a prevailing " stigma of print ", a social convention that putatively restricted their literary works to private and courtly audiences"as opposed to commercial endeavours"at the risk of social disgrace if violated. Bacon to avoid the consequences of advocating a more republican form of government, [52] and Marlowe to avoid imprisonment or worse after faking his death and fleeing the country. JPG Proponents of an alternative author say that nothing in the documentary record explicitly identifies Shakespeare as a writer, [54] and that the evidence instead supports a career as a businessman and real-estate investor. Any prominence he might have had in the London theatrical world aside from his role as a front for the true author was as a result of his money-lending activities, trading in theatrical properties, and possibly a period as an actor. Such characters are taken as broad hints indicating that the London theatrical world knew Shakespeare was a front for an anonymous author. The language of the will is mundane and unpoetic and makes no mention of personal papers, books, poems, or the 18 plays that remained unpublished at the time of his death. Its only theatrical reference"monetary gifts to fellow actors to buy mourning rings "was interlined after the will had been written, casting suspicion on the authenticity of the bequests. Monument images Oxford had died five years earlier. Authorship theorists argue that the figure originally portrayed a man clutching a sack of grain or wool that was later altered to help conceal the identity of the true author. William Shakespeare Nearly all academic Shakespeareans believe that the author referred to as "Shakespeare" was the same William Shakespeare who was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in and who died there in Of some, next to nothing is known. Others, such as Jonson, Marlowe, and John Marston , are more fully documented because of their education, close connections with the court, or brushes with the law. Shakespear ye Player coatofarms. This honorific was conventionally designated by the title "Master" or its abbreviations "Mr. Muc he a Doo about nothinge. Thother the second parte of the history of kinge henry the iiiijth with the humors of Sr John ffalstaff: Wrytten by mr Shakespere. Mr William Shakespeare his historye of Kyng Lear as yt was played before the kinges maiestie at Whitehall vppon St Stephans night at Christmas Last by his maiesties servantes playinge vsually at the globe on the Banksyde vj d", [77] which appeared on the title page of King Lear Q1 as "M. Shakespeare" by Leonard Digges. He was indeed honest, and of an open, and free nature; had an excellent fancy; brave notions, and gentle expressions. His duties were to supervise and censor plays for the public theatres, arrange court performances of plays, and, after , to license plays for publication. Buc noted on the title page of George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield , an anonymous play, that he had consulted Shakespeare on its authorship. Buc was meticulous in his efforts to attribute books and plays to the correct author, and in he personally licensed King Lear for publication as written by "Master William Shakespeare". Passionate Pilgrim title page comparison. Shakespeare", and in The Second Part of the Return from Parnassus , the anonymous playwright has the actor Kempe say to the actor Burbage, "Few of the university men pen plays well Heywood protested this piracy in his Apology for Actors , adding that the author was "much offended with M. Jaggard that altogether unknown to him presumed to make so bold with his name. Of Shakespeare, he writes: Our modern poets to that pass are driven, Those names are curtailed which they first had given; And, as we wished to have their memories drowned, We scarcely can afford them half their sound. Mellifluous Shake-speare, whose enchanting quill Commanded mirth or passion, was but Will. Heywood, wishing what I write might be read in their light", here using the abbreviation "M. JPG The monument to Shakespeare , erected in Stratford before , bears a plaque with an inscription identifying Shakespeare as a writer. The first two Latin lines translate to "In judgment a Pylian, in genius a Socrates, in art a Maro, the earth covers him, the people mourn him, Olympus possesses him", referring to Nestor , Socrates , Virgil , and Mount Olympus. The monument was not only

referred to in the First Folio, but other early 17th-century records identify it as being a memorial to Shakespeare and transcribe the inscription. Anti-Stratfordians have cast suspicion on these bequests, which were interlined, and claim that they were added later as part of a conspiracy. However, the will was proved in the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury George Abbot in London on 22 June, and the original will was copied into the court register with the bequests intact. "Sweet Swan of Avon! Shakespeare" that was published in the Folio, in which he refers to "thy Stratford Monument". Shakespeare sometime between and, in which he suggests that Shakespeare should have been buried in Westminster Abbey next to Chaucer, Beaumont, and Spenser. This poem circulated very widely in manuscript and survives today in more than two dozen contemporary copies; several of these have a fuller, variant title "On Mr. William Shakespeare, he died in April", which unambiguously specifies that the reference is to Shakespeare of Stratford.