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A historical survey and evaluation of the most prominent theories that Shakespeare did not write the works attributed to him

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A HISTORICAL SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF THE MOST
PROMINENT THEORIES THAT SHAKESPEARE DID NOT
WRITE THE WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of English
College of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Lola Vida Johnson
June 1959

Read not to contradict and to confute
Nor to believe and take for granted;
Nor to find talk and discourse
But to weigh and consider.

--Sir Francis Bacon

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The question of the authorship of the plays, poems, and sonnets traditionally attributed to the pen of William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon has now been before the public for over one hundred years. Many of the most noted poets, playwrights, and nobles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been assigned the authorship of these works. This controversy can be compared to the controversy over Homer's authorship. In 1795, Friederick Augustus Wolf proposed that Homer did not write The Iliad and The Odyssey. By 1900, Wolf had been disproven, but the question was one of great importance when it was first introduced.¹ The anti-Shakespearean contention has never actually been proven or disproven, and it remains important in the field of English literature. However, from the time the question first came before the public in 1856 until this study was first begun, no extensive and readily available history of the subject had been written.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study to make a historical survey of the major theories of

¹John Fiske, "Forty Years of Bacon-Shakespeare Folly," A Century of Science and Other Essays (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899), pp. 351-55.

the controversy and put them under one cover. A further purpose is to evaluate them wherever necessary, although many of the theories refute themselves.

Importance of the study. Such a study can be justified when the growth of the controversy is considered. There are no longer only a few isolated theories; over four thousand books and articles on the subject have been written in six languages. This literature has advanced over fifteen contenders for the authorship, numerous group theories, and several theories that the chosen contender was the author of nearly all the literary work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Fellowships and societies supporting one or the other of the contenders have been founded in most of the major cities of the United States, England, and Germany, and each of these groups has its own publication. Newspapers and magazines report when something new is attempted or discovered. With all this attention being paid to the subject, a historical survey seems pertinent.

What has been done on the problem. There have been some attempts to catalogue the theories. In 1884 in Cincinnati, W. H. Wyman published his Bibliography of the Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy.² This bibliography listed two

²W. H. Wyman, The Bibliography of the Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy (Cincinnati: Cox and Company, 1884).

hundred and twenty-five books and articles dealing with the subject.³ It is interesting to compare this with the work of the late Joseph S. Galland of Northwestern University. Just before his death in 1947, Professor Galland completed a bibliography of the controversy which he called Digesta Anti-Shakespeareana: An Historical and Analytical Bibliography of the Shakespeare Authorship and Identity Controversies. This bibliography contained more than fifteen hundred pages in manuscript form, and no one could afford to publish it.⁴ By comparing these two works, it is easily seen that there has been a tremendous growth in the controversy in just sixty-three years.

Historical surveys or listings of the theories have been limited. Some literary histories give a minimum of space to the subject while many others do not even mention it. Many of the books which present contenders for the authorship outline a brief history of the controversy, but such accounts are usually quite limited in scope.

It would be well to mention here a book released in the fall of 1958 by the University of California Press. It is titled The Poacher from Stratford and was written by Frank W. Wadsworth. This book purports to cover the same

³J. M. Robertson, "William Shakespeare: The Bacon-Shakespeare Theory," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1957 ed.), XX, 447-48.

⁴William F. Friedman and Elizabeth S. Friedman, The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957, p. 5.

subject as this study. The author of this study has worked independently without knowledge of Mr. Wadsworth's research and has never seen his book.

Limitations of the study. There are many limitations and difficulties in a study such as this.

Because of the great mass of literature on the controversy, it would be impossible to cover it all in a Master's thesis. Therefore, only the most important and the most interesting theories and presentations can be discussed.

Another limitation is in the amount of original work. Of necessity, most of the material in this study has been taken from other works. Every mention of a theory or backing of a theory has been entered on a chronological chart, from which this study was written. If the book mentioned was available, it was read and notes were taken; if the book was not available but was described, notes were taken, with credit given to the author of the discussion. The original work involved in this study, then, was the compilation of the chronological chart, and the gathering together, under one cover, of the data which were found in bits and pieces under many covers.

Still another limitation was in the availability of material. Many of the older works were no longer obtainable. Much of the data on them had to be gathered from such sources as magazine and book reviews and from remarks in books by

5

other authors. Many of the books were in French and German, and these works were not usually available in this country.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The authorship controversy has gained enough importance to have its own vocabulary. The words listed below are in the everyday language of the people who are involved on either side of the controversy.

Anti-Shakespearean. The term "anti-Shakespearean" is used to designate all those who oppose the idea that Shakespeare wrote the words credited to him. The term "anti-Shakespearean" is interchangeable with the term "anti-Stratfordian."

Baconian. The advocates of the theory that Sir Francis Bacon, first Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, was the author of the Shakespeare works are called "Baconians."

The biliteral cipher. The biliteral cipher of Sir Francis Bacon has played an important part in the controversy. Bacon detailed this cipher in his De Augmentis Scientiarum, and the Baconians have been using it to "prove" his authorship of the Shakespeare works. The dictionaries define "biliteral" as "being composed by two letters," and this is the principle of Bacon's cipher. He designed it in order to conceal messages in the pages of printed books.

The printer had to use two type faces, and the fonts⁵ had to differ, but so slightly that the casual reader could not notice. The alphabet for the bilateral cipher is as follows:

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| A - aaaaa | G - aabba | N - abbaa | T - baaba |
| B - aaaab | H - aabbb | O - abbab | UV - baabb |
| C - aaaba | I-J - abaaa | P - abbba | W - babaa |
| D - aaabb | K - abaab | Q - abbbb | X - babab |
| E - aabaa | L - ababa | R - baaaa | Y - babba |
| F - aabab | M - ababb | S - baaab | Z - babbb |

In the enciphering (printing) the A's are represented by light face letters; B's are represented by bold face letters. The first five letters of a text such as "Silence is the virtue of fools" will give the first plain-text letter, the next five letters, the second plain-text letter, and so on. A twenty-five letter cipher text (see below) will encipher only five plain-text letters. The cipher message must be divided into five-letter groups and the A-B letters are placed under them according to type face (bold faced letters are indicated by underlining):

| | | | | | |
|---------|---------------|-------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| CIPHER: | SILE <u>N</u> | CEIST | HEUI <u>R</u> | TUEO <u>F</u> | FOO <u>L</u> S |
| KEY: | aaaab | aaaaa | aaaba | abbab | abbab |

The key is then turned into the plain-text by use of the alphabet:

| | | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| KEY: | aaaab | aaaaa | aaaba | abbab | abbaa |
| MESSAGE: | B | A | C | O | N |

⁵A font is an assortment of type of one size and style.

The line was written by Sir Francis Bacon and the plain-text message proves it.⁶

Controversy. The term "controversy" will be used throughout the study to designate the whole field of argument for and against the authorship of Shakespeare. The word "controversy" fits not only the general question of the authorship, but also the conflicts of Shakespeareans among themselves and of the anti-Shakespeareans among themselves.

Disintegrationist. The word "Disintegrationist" was originally applied only to scholars who followed stylistic clues in order to discover the work of other authors within the Shakespeare works. It was also used to designate those who searched for revisions by Shakespeare in his works to find the successive strata of his work. Since the controversy has begun, however, this term has been applied to those who are the supporters of a theory that the works were the result of group authorship. It is in this latter sense that the term will be used in this study.

Marlovian. Those who believe that Christopher Marlowe was the author of the Shakespeare works are called "Marlovians."

⁶ Lawrence Dwight Smith, Cryptography: The Science of Secret Writing (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1943), pp. 151-52.

The Mendenhall Technique. Somewhat later in this study there will be references to the Mendenhall Technique. It seems necessary to discuss it here where other terms are being defined. This technique was originated by Dr. Thomas Corwin Mendenhall, who was a professor at the college that was later to become Ohio State University. It was an investigative technique by which the identity of an author could be discovered through his writing; from a mechanical point of view, an author's style of composition is uniquely individual. An author is unaware of his peculiarities of usage in the number of words in a sentence, his use of long and short words, and his sentence structure. Therefore, he cannot change these things because he is not really aware of them. Mendenhall took a sampling of the work of a group of noted writers of poetry and prose. He counted each letter of every word and set up graphs for each author which showed the author's use of a vocabulary containing words anywhere from one to fifteen letters in length. The graphs showed that each author has his own characteristics in the use of words of a certain number of letters. After the tests were computed down to the last decimal, it was found that no two authors are alike. The positive value of this technique is that it is completely objective. Having proved his theory, however, Dr. Mendenhall laid it aside, and it is not used to any extent today.

Oxfordian (Oxonian). Those who support the theory that Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, was the author of Shakespeare's Works are called "Oxfordians" or "Oxonians."

The Shakespeare Works. During the course of this study, the words "Shakespeare Works" or, simply, "Works" will be used to designate the complete works of William Shakespeare. Wherever the initial letter of the term "works" is capitalized, it will indicate Shakespeare's Works.

The spelling of Shakespeare's name. In the literature of the authorship controversy, many spellings of Shakespeare's name are found. The anti-Shakespeareans use the spelling "Shakespeare" when referring to the pseudonym of their contender and one of the variations of the Shakespeare name (Shaxper, Shakespere, Shagsper, Shake-spear, etc.) when referring to the man of Stratford. In this study, the name will be spelled "Shakespeare" unless a direct quotation employs some variation.

Shakespeareans. Those who believe Shakespeare of Stratford wrote the plays, poems, and sonnets credited to his name are called "Shakespeareans;" they may also be designated as "Stratfordians."

Theory. The different ideas of authorship are called "theories." Examples of this are the Baconian theory, the Oxfordian theory, and the Marlovian theory.

III. SOURCES AND METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

The author of this study first gained an interest in the authorship controversy through reading Calvin Hoffman's The Murder of the Man Who Was "Shakespeare;"⁷ Hoffman proposed Christopher Marlowe as the author of the Shakespeare Works. Following this, several books were read at random which championed the authorship of Bacon, de Vere, and Elizabeth I. It was then determined that some aspect of this subject would be used for this study. At this point it was discovered that only fragments of the history of the controversy were available; this determined the exact subject.

The next step was to consult several sources: the card indexes of the College of the Pacific Library, the Stockton Public Library, the Berkeley Public Library, the Richmond Public Library, the California State Library, and the University of California Library; bibliographies in books already read; The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature; The International Index to Periodicals; The Essay and

⁷ Calvin Hoffman, The Murder of the Man Who Was "Shakespeare" (New York: Julian Messner, 1955).

General Literature Index; and The Encyclopaedia Britannica. From these sources a general bibliography was compiled, and eliminations were made until a working bibliography was completed.

Next, an outline was made, and, with this as a guide, reading and note taking were begun. The bibliography was changed as the reading progressed; some works were deleted and others were added as bibliographies were found in the books being read. The sources were, as far as possible, the actual books or articles in which theories were originally presented or refuted. Where the original work was not available, a search was made for a description of the work. Very often, such a description was found in the refutation of a theory. Also useful were those literary histories which carried any kind of account of the controversy.

When all of the reading and note-taking had been completed, a chronological chart of the theories was made. This chart began with the earliest theories and listed all theories up to the present time. In this way, the definite pattern of the theories could be seen.

The next step was to gather background material. In order to obtain a history of the period, of the Works in question, Hall and Albion's A History of England and the

British Empire⁸ and Trevelyan's History of England⁹ were consulted. Two sources were used so that a more complete picture of the period could be obtained. Material for short biographies of Shakespeare and the contenders for his authorship were gathered from The Dictionary of National Biography.

When all the necessary data had been gathered, the note-cards were catalogued in a file according to their place in the outline. The actual writing of the study was then begun.

From the beginning of work on the study, it was necessary to be on guard against two pitfalls. The first of these was the tendency to deviate too radically from the set outline. The subject is an unusual one, and many people offered clippings, magazines, and books. It was essential to exercise great caution. If these offerings were useful to the set outline, they were used; if they were not useful, they were set aside. If all the material from well-meaning friends had been incorporated into the study, it could have been expanded to the size of a doctoral dissertation.

The second possible pitfall was gullibility on the part of the researcher. Many of the theories were plausible on first reading. It was a requisite to study them carefully

⁸ Walter P. Hall, Robert G. Albion, and Jennie B. P. Albion, A History of England and the British Empire (third edition; Boston: Ginn and Company, 1953), pp. 252-336.

⁹ G. M. Trevelyan, History of England (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1953), II, 49-173.

together with their refutations, to prevent the mind from wandering away from the subject at hand to an interest and temporary belief in one particular theory.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY

Several methods of organization were tried and discarded. The most feasible one seemed to be to organize the study according to centuries in strict chronological order. This was an excellent plan up through the nineteenth century, when only Bacon received any real mention as a contender for the authorship. However, many new contenders were presented in the twentieth century, and there would have been only confusion if such a method had been employed. The final organization decided upon was the one used in this study.

First, it is necessary to present some background of the period in which the Shakespeare Works were written and a history of the criticism of the Works in order that a reason for the controversy can be seen. It was for this reason that a background history of the life and education of Shakespeare was added. The Elizabethan period and the life and education of the man from Stratford were important factors in the development of the controversy.

The next chapters are concerned with the various contenders. First, there is Baron, then Oxford, and then Marlowe as the most important and/or interesting contenders;

each occupies a full chapter. Following these chapters is one devoted to other contenders who have not received as much attention. Because of their position as neither fish nor fowl, the Disintegrationists will be mentioned in the main chapters, but these references will be made only in passing, as these people will receive full coverage of their own in the chapter devoted to other contenders. With the account of each contender is presented a refutation of the claims made for him. During the course of the study some of the theories will be explained in detail while others will be only mentioned. The amount of space devoted to each will depend upon its importance or interest in the whole picture of the controversy.

The final chapter deals with refutations and conclusions drawn from the study, and recommendations from observations made by the researcher during the course of the study.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE CONTROVERSY

The Shakespeare authorship controversy came before the public in 1856, although there had been some isolated writings on the subject for about one hundred years prior to that date. The main body of this study will be concerned with these arguments and theories, but first it is necessary to have some background of the times in which Shakespeare lived and wrote, of his life and education, and of the criticism of his work up to the time the controversy began. This background is important to the controversy because it permits the reader to see why such a controversy is possible. For this reason, the following chapter will include a background history of the Elizabethan period and the theater, a brief biography of William Shakespeare, a discussion of his education, a brief resume of the literary criticism of his Works up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and a discussion of the earliest authorship theories.

I. THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

In order to better understand why a controversy over the authorship of the Works commonly attributed to Shakespeare is possible, it is necessary to examine briefly the history of the time when Shakespeare lived. The theories

and ideas about the period in which the Works in question were written are fascinating, contradictory, and colored by tradition. Specifically, it encompasses the years from near the middle of reign of Elizabeth I (about 1580) to near the middle of the reign of James I (about 1615). When Shakespeare began writing, England was under the leadership of Elizabeth I. Historians often call this age of Elizabeth the Golden Age, but in many ways it was only gold-plated and the plate was thin. It was an age of many paradoxes.

Elizabeth herself was a paradox. In any discussion of her, there will often be as many views as there are participants in the discussion. She was a shrew, and she was an angel; she was unfeminine in her strength, and she practiced all the feminine wiles ever known to woman; she was selfish, indiscreet, and immoral, and she was Good Queen Bess; she was a born diplomat, and she was a menace to England's foreign relations. All of these views can be found in the history books, biographies, and discussions of this woman.

The period of her reign was a golden age for exploration and conquest. Drake's trip around the world opened up new possibilities for the expansion of England's empire. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 was more than just a great naval victory; it brought world supremacy from the south of Europe to the north, opening the way for Protestantism. Coupled with Drake's voyages of discovery, it opened

for trade the Pacific Ocean, which had been considered a Spanish lake up to that time. But, in spite of the greatness of all of this, Elizabeth was not particularly interested, although she made the correct gestures of appreciation.

The explorations, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the opening of the Pacific Ocean all caused a surge of power in England. This great burgeoning affected the philosophers, the scientists, and the writers. It was truly a golden and glorious age for them. Paradoxically, it took later generations to recognize the genius produced at this time.

Through all of this, the theater went its own way while producing some of the greatest geniuses that the world has ever known in the field of play-writing. These men who were connected with the theater and who were later to be revered were considered to be on the same level as the pick-pockets and prostitutes who gathered around the theaters. In spite of the dazzling pomp of the Court and Elizabeth's love of plays and masques, this attitude did not change. Because the law said that players without royal patronage were subject to arrest, many of the playing companies asked for and received royal patronage from nobles and even from the Crown, but, in many cases, the patron had little to do with the company. The nobility within the Court acted in masques presented for the Queen, whose Court was one of brilliant and lavish entertainment. Elizabeth wrote some of

these masques and took part in the acting. She was a great patron of literature and of the theater, and it was due to her that drama developed as far as it did in the sixteenth century. It is strange, then, to us in the twentieth century that actors and playwrights were relegated to such a low position in the social hierarchy and that nobles were censured for writing plays to be acted in the theaters around London.

Within the theater itself, many of these playwrights who were later to be considered great were working, but they had no protection. There was no copyright law, and plagiarism and outright theft of plays were not uncommon. Actors memorized plays and then wrote them out and sold them to another company either as their own or without author. Plays were written by one playwright and later "doctored" by other playwrights. To add to the general confusion of authorship, many nobles and scholars used names or initials of others on their works and often dated these works falsely because of the low status accorded playwrights.¹ Further confusion was probably added at the time of the Puritan regime in England which followed the beheading of Charles I in 1649. The Puritans had closed the theaters in 1642, and when they came to absolute

¹James Phinney Baxter, The Greatest of Literary Problems (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), p. xxiii.

power in 1649, they completely outlawed the theater. It does not seem strange, therefore, that many manuscripts and documents were lost or destroyed. When all of the above factors have been taken into consideration, it is not difficult to see why there is a lack of knowledge today about much of the authorship of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.²

The playwrights of this period are called Elizabethans today, and, in most cases, their writings reflect the upheaval and surge of the times. It is strange to note that, though the period is named for her, Elizabeth had little contact with the great writers of her time. Many historians, among them Conyers Read, feel that Elizabeth was not an Elizabethan. She was more closely identified with her people, who were not Elizabethans, than she was with the great writers, scientists, and philosophers.³

II. SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

More is known about the personal life of William Shakespeare than is known about the lives of most other

²Parts of the discussion about conditions in the Elizabethan theater were taken from the lectures of Professor Martha Pierce in the Development of English Drama course at College of the Pacific. Permission to use secured.

³Conyers Read, "Good Queen Bess," The Making of English History (New York: The Dryden Press, 1952), pp. 177-87.

poets and playwrights of the period. In addition to known facts, many traditions have grown up around the man from Stratford which cannot be proven true or false. For this reason, the account of his life as it appears below is a tabulation of only the known facts that are universally agreed upon by biographers of the poet.

William Shakespeare was born to John and Mary Arden Shakespeare on April 23, 1564, in Stratford-on-Avon. The Shakespeares were a substantial middle-class family, and John was something of a civic leader. Most historians feel that William attended the local grammar school where he picked up some knowledge of the classics, but reverses in the family fortunes forced him to quit school when he was about fourteen.⁴ In 1582, William married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years his senior. The birth of a daughter, Susanna, six months later gives a reason for the marriage, but there is no proof that the match was as unhappy as tradition has said it was. The years from 1585 to 1592 are unaccounted for and have been the cause of much speculation, but it is known that sometime during this period Shakespeare arrived in London. He worked as an actor and must have been doing some writing. By 1597, shrewd investments in his acting

⁴There is no actual proof of this grammar school tradition, and it is an important one in the controversy. It will be discussed in the next section, "The Question of Education."

company enabled him to buy New Place, a show residence of Stratford. He also bought other property there, and around 1612, he retired to Stratford, where he died in 1616.⁵

The above information can be augmented by documents which illustrate Shakespeare's business and legal affairs. There is ample record of Shakespeare the man, but there is not as much about Shakespeare the poet and playwright. This fact has been very important to the anti-Shakespeareans, who discount the few contemporary allusions to Shakespeare as a writer. This point will be discussed under the title "Shakespearean Criticism" later in this chapter.

III. THE QUESTION OF EDUCATION AND THE MISSING YEARS

While the fact that there are few records of Shakespeare as a writer weighs heavily with the anti-Shakespeareans, there is another important point which carries even more weight: the question of education. The anti-Shakespeareans contend (and rightfully so) that nowhere is there a record of Shakespeare's ever having attended school. They then point to the "great learning" displayed in the plays, poems, and sonnets, and say that the uneducated "lout" and commoner of Stratford-on-Avon could not have been the author.

⁵Sidney Lee, "William Shakespeare," Dictionary of National Biography, Sir Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, editors (London: Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1921-1922), pp. 1286-1335.

Shakespeare's education. This emphasis on the "great learning" in the Works by the anti-Shakespeareans can be blamed on no one but the Shakespeareans themselves. During the Romantic period of the nineteenth century, there was a movement to revive interest in Shakespeare, and he was given wild critical acclaim. Critics and scholars found more in the Works than was probably ever intended, and their imaginations went beyond all reasonable limits in their praise of the knowledge shown by Shakespeare.⁶ The anti-Shakespeareans, finding no record of Shakespeare's ever having attended school, were quick to turn to well-educated men as their candidates for the authorship; most of these contenders were university graduates.

There is little doubt that Shakespeare did not have a university education. Where scholars disagree is on the point of his having had a grammar school education. Here, there are two schools of thought: the first says that Shakespeare had such an education and it prepared him to write; the second claims it does not matter whether or not he had an education because he was a natural genius. The first group points out that, since John Shakespeare was a civic leader, it would have been natural for his son to attend Stratford Grammar School.

⁶There will be further exploration of this critical acclaim later in this chapter under the title "Shakespearean Criticism."

Thomas W. Baldwin, an American scholar and Professor of English at the University of Illinois, subscribed to both schools of thought. He became interested in the education question while doing research on the grammar schools of Elizabethan England. In 1944, he published a two-volume work entitled William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke. It was a thorough study of the grammar schools of the period, and it examined the possibilities of Shakespeare's having attended the Stratford Grammar School. Professor Baldwin thought it strongly possible that Shakespeare attended the school at Stratford, and, that if he did, he had the only formal literary training offered in his day and had as good a formal literary training as his contemporaries. Stratford Grammar School provided the knowledge and techniques from the classics that are found in the Works, for grammar schools of the Elizabethan period offered the linguistic basis of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The universities, which were professional schools, applied these subjects to the professions of divinity, law, and physic.⁷

Professor Baldwin also belonged to the school of thought which says that it did not matter whether Shakespeare had an education; he could have been a self-made man who

⁷Thomas W. Baldwin, William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greek (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), II, 662-63.

taught himself.⁸ Shakespeare learned and assimilated this learning with his own natural genius. He displayed no more knowledge than is to be found in the writings of most other Elizabethans.⁹ This viewpoint was best summed up by George Sampson in The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature. Sampson said:

As we know nothing about Shakespeare's life and upbringing we do not know what he knew. The plays exhibit nothing resembling omniscience or even multi-science. There is not the slightest correlation between great learning and great creative power. The symptoms interpreted as evidence of omniscience are exhibited daily by journalists and barristers. The belief that special capacity for scholarship, creative art and public affairs can be found only in the "upper classes" is a curious and almost pathetic superstition of the servile or genteel mind. The cranks who have declared that the plays of Shakespeare are too good for an actor to have written have never noticed that they are too bad for a Lord Chancellor to have written. They contain elementary mistakes of fact. They are unoriginal in substance. They are hap-hazard in form. They are full of loose ends. They are thoroughly untidy. They contain singularly few literary allusions. They bear every mark of hasty improvization (sic). They smell of the theatre, never of the study. They are not, in any respect, considered works. A man with Shakespeare's unrivalled power of registering peculiarities of human character could easily acquire and assimilate the kind of knowledge shown in the plays. What we know definitely about Shakespeare's education is that he studied in two great seats of learning, the theatre and the world.¹⁰

When Shakespeare's education is discussed, very often the question of the missing years is introduced. Between the

⁸ Ibid., II, 663-64.

⁹ R. C. Churchill, "Baconian Heresy: A Post Mortem," Nineteenth Century and After, 140 (November, 1946), 265.

¹⁰ George Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), pp. 257-58.

last record of his presence in Stratford and his appearance in a London theater, there is a gap. Most Shakespearean scholars date this period of time from 1584, when tradition says Shakespeare was caught poaching on the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy, to 1592, when he emerged as an actor and playwright in London.¹¹ Tradition also has it that after Shakespeare left Stratford, he went to London, where he worked as a groom around the theaters before he gradually moved into acting. There is no documentary proof of what actually happened during this time, but many theories have been advanced, and almost all of them show how Shakespeare could have acquired knowledge of one kind or another.

Actor. It is possible that young William left Stratford with one of the travelling companies of actors which came through the town. Leicester's men visited Stratford in 1586-1587, and it is this company which later biographers decided took in the young man. If this were the case, he would have had to change companies until he finally joined the Chamberlain's company. It was with this company that he did most of his writing.¹² This theory would explain Shakespeare's appearance in the theater in 1592, and it would also give him an apprenticeship in playwriting.

¹¹ Lee, op. cit., pp. 1291-92.

¹² Ibid., pp. 1292-93.

Soldier. The appearance of Leicester's company in Stratford in 1586 and 1587 gave rise to another theory. The late Alfred Duff Cooper, first Viscount Norwich and a writer and political leader, believed that Shakespeare served with the army in the Lowlands. Cooper presented his ideas in a little book entitled Sergeant Shakespeare.¹³ Leicester, Cooper said, was able to help Shakespeare out of his difficulty with Sir Thomas Lucy, and in return, Shakespeare joined Leicester's army. Cooper based much of his theory on Shakespeare's knowledge of the army as shown in the plays. The idea is interesting and would account for Shakespeare's characterization of soldiers and for his slight knowledge of the continent. However, Lee mentioned that there were several William Shakespeares in the parishes around Stratford-on-Avon.¹⁴ If there were a William Shakespeare in the army, it need not have been the playwright.

Schoolmaster. John Aubrey (1626-1697), an antiquary, said he heard that Shakespeare had been a country schoolmaster. Some scholars have felt that Holofernes in Love's Labour's Lost and other schoolmasters in the plays were the results of this experience, but Aubrey's story never gained

¹³ Alfred Duff Cooper, Sergeant Shakespeare (New York: Viking Press, 1949).

¹⁴ Lee, op. cit., p. 1290.

much credence because he is considered to have been unmethodical, and inaccurate.¹⁵

There are other conjectures and theories about this period, but nothing concrete has been proven. The Elizabethan period was a time of great happenings and great thinking, and Shakespeare could have been doing almost anything. Whether or not his experiences during this time account for what is shown in the plays is still one of the mysteries which surround this man.

IV. SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM

Shakespearean criticism has also played an important part in the controversy. This criticism includes contemporary allusions and the criticism of the Restoration, the classical movement, and the Romantic movement.

Contemporary references to Shakespeare and his Works can be found in diaries which recorded the fact that the diarist had seen one or the other of the plays. References can also be found in contemporary essays and plays. The anonymous work The Return from Parnassus, which is a part of a series of three plays, contains allusions to both Shakespeare and Jonson.¹⁶ Francis Meres, in his Palladis Tamia;

¹⁵ F. E. Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1952), p. 41.

¹⁶ Frayne Williams, Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1941), p. 253.

Wits Treasury (1598), discussed Shakespeare and his Works at great length. Meres, a schoolmaster and Cambridge divine, cited Shakespeare as the best of the lyric and tragic poets and one of the best writers of comedy. Meres listed eleven of the plays from the Works; Shakespeare was the only writer who was given such extensive treatment in this volume, which cited about eighty English writers. This was before Shakespeare had written what are considered to be his best plays.¹⁷ John Webster, who was a rival dramatist, praised Shakespeare highly in the preface to his play, The White Devil.¹⁸ References were also made to Shakespeare by Ben Jonson, who both censured and lauded him. His eulogy in the First Folio praised Shakespeare highly, and Jonson wrote the only complete and contemporary essay on Shakespeare in his Timber, or Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter. The essay, which is entitled "De Shakespeare Nostrati" ("Of Shakespeare, Our Fellow Country-Man"), defended Jonson's criticism of Shakespeare; nevertheless, it ended with high praise for the man from Stratford.¹⁹

There are other contemporary allusions to Shakespeare. It is not the purpose of this study to go into them in detail.

¹⁷Sampson, op. cit., p. 257.

¹⁸Williams, loc. cit.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 341-42.

They can be found in most of the standard biographies of Shakespeare. Their importance is their bearing on the controversy. The Stratfordians pointed to these allusions as proof that Shakespeare was known in his own time as a writer. The anti-Stratfordians tended to ignore them; if these debunkers did use the allusions in their arguments, it was to show either that many people were in on the hoax or that many people were fooled by the hoax. The reader may take his choice.

After Shakespeare's death in 1616, the popularity of his plays continued. In 1623, John Heminge and Henry Con-dell, friends and fellow-actors of Shakespeare in the Chamberlain's-King's Company, brought out the First Folio, which contained thirty-six plays, eighteen of which had been unpublished. The Second Folio was published in 1632; it contained a few minor corrections of the First Folio.

Then in 1642, the religious group known as the Puritans, who had been rising to power during the reign of Elizabeth I, gained enough strength in Parliament to close the theaters. By 1649, the Puritans, after beheading Charles I, had taken over the government. England was without a monarch for eleven years, and under the strict moral rule of these religious zealots, the theater was outlawed.

In 1660, the monarchy was restored, and Charles II came to the throne. During the Restoration, light comedies

and drama were popular, and Shakespeare's plays were modified or "improved." To please the taste of a Court which had turned to French culture, more songs and dances were added to those in the plays until they resembled musical comedies.²⁰ Shakespeare's Works did not reach the popularity of the work of such Restoration authors as Dryden, Congreve, Wycherly, and Sheridan, even though the Third Folio (1663) and the Fourth Folio (1685) were printed. However, these Folios contained mistakes and spurious plays; today they are considered to be of no authority.²¹

The Classical movement then took over, and restraint, reason, and unity were sought in the drama. Shakespeare's Works could meet none of these criteria and were scorned by such leaders of Classicism as Voltaire, who felt that the original classics from which Shakespeare took his plays were much better.

The revolt against Classicism came with the Romantic movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Liberty, emotion, and variety now became the criteria of drama, and the Romantics seized on Shakespeare as a natural

²⁰ Halliday, op. cit., p. 508.

²¹ Ibid., p. 213.

genius who embodied all in which they believed. Shakespeare worship spread to Germany, and impossible knowledge and hidden philosophy were found in the plays.²² By the late nineteenth century, critics allowed imagination to overcome reason, and to Shakespeare were attributed qualities and knowledge he never possessed. As an example, Edward Vining, who worked on the Bankside Edition of Shakespeare's Works (1886-1906), took the following lines from the 1603 quarto of Hamlet:

Full forty years are past, their date is gone,
 Since happy time joined both our hearts as one:
 And now the blood that filled my youthful veins
 Runs weakly in their pipes, . . .²³

It is a sad commentary on his scholarship that Vining chose for his example a spurious passage from the "bad" quarto of Hamlet of 1603. Vining said that this showed knowledge of the circulation of blood in the veins, a fact that Harvey probably did not suspect until at least thirteen years later. This makes it look as though Shakespeare possessed knowledge that even the great Harvey did not have. Actually, the ancients had this knowledge, and fourteen hundred years before Hamlet was written, Galen proved that blood also runs in the arteries. Harvey discovered only that blood changes

²² John Fiske, "Forty Years of Bacon-Shakespeare Folly," A Century of Science and Other Essays (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899), p. 399.

²³ This is a spurious passage.

color after going through the lungs. Thus, it was common knowledge that blood flows through the veins.²⁴ Not only was Shakespeare credited with supposedly impossible knowledge, but also his characters were removed from the plays and examined minutely for symbolism and motive.

Reaction to this overabundance of praise came in the twentieth century when realism was applied to the plays. The characters were put back in the plays, and the plays were put back in their original Elizabethan settings, but it was too late; the damage had been done. The controversy began in 1856 and was at its peak by the end of the century.

Most scholars who comment upon the controversy feel that the unrestrained acclaim of the Romantic period was responsible for the controversy. The assumption during that period that Shakespeare was a man accomplished in law, philosophy, science, and the classics, even though no records are to be found of his ever having received a formal education, are responsible for the place held by the controversy today.²⁵ The fact that the plays, in all probability, were written only for the stage and to make money was overlooked as the controversy became more and more prominent.

²⁴Fiske, op. cit., p. 400.

²⁵J. M. Robertson, "William Shakespeare: The Bacon-Shakespeare Theory," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1957 ed.), XX, 448.

V. THE BEGINNING OF THE CONTROVERSY

The controversy first came before the public in 1856 with the publications of Delia Bacon and William Henry Smith,²⁶ but these two were not the first to question the authorship of the Works. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, several men expressed their doubt that Shakespeare had written the plays, poems, and sonnets attributed to him. Many of these men did not propose an author; a few did name a possible author, but they did not make an issue of their beliefs.

It should be noted at this point that all of the works on the controversy written by disbelievers prior to 1856 were undiscovered and/or unexploited until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and that, in all cases, they were isolated works.

The first person known to have disputed Shakespeare's authorship was a "Captain" Goulding.²⁷ Goulding wrote a small book entitled An Essay Against Too Much Reading, which was published in 1728. He maintained that Shakespeare was no historian or grammarian and probably could not write English. Goulding further maintained that Shakespeare used

²⁶ Delia Bacon and William Henry Smith will be discussed in Chapter III.

²⁷ At the time of this study, Goulding was the first known to have questioned the authorship, but new discoveries are always being made and it is possible that someone will be found who wrote earlier.

a ghost writer to set down his ideas. Scholars cannot decide whether Goulding was serious or whether he was involved in the deflationary practices that were so popular in the early eighteenth century.²⁸

The next work, chronologically, was a short essay entitled "Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare," which appeared in 1767. It was written by Richard Farmer, Master and Vice-Chancellor at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, as a refutation of those critics who had been vehement in their assertions concerning Shakespeare's great learning. Farmer showed that Shakespeare's Greek came from North and Chapman, not from Homer and Plutarch; his Latin from Golding, his Italian from Painter, and his Spanish from Shelton.²⁹ The essay cautioned against trying to read into Shakespeare what was never there, but it did not comment on the authorship.³⁰ However, the Baconians and other anti-Shakespeareans later used the essay in their arguments as proof that Shakespeare had no learning.

²⁸ William F. Friedman and Elizabeth S. Friedman, The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), p. 1.

²⁹ Sir Thomas North translated Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans; George Chapman did translations of Homer; Arthur Golding translated Ovid's Metamorphoses from Latin; William Painter did translations from Italian; and Thomas Shelton translated Cervantes Don Quixote from Spanish to English.

³⁰ Halliday, op. cit., p. 201.

Two years later, in 1769, a book entitled The Life and Adventures of Commonsense: An Historical Allegory appeared.³¹ Most scholars believe it to have been the work of Herbert Lawrence, a surgeon and apothecary, who was a good friend of David Garrick, the noted Shakespearean actor. At the time of its publication, the book ran into two editions in English and was translated into French, but its popularity waned, and it went undiscovered until 1916, when a copy of it was put up for sale in New York. It was sold for \$1,825 when attention was called to a passage which seemed to refer to Bacon as Shakespeare.³²

Lawrence's book is an allegory that has been interpreted as demonstrating that Bacon was the author of the Works and Shakespeare, a common thief. In his book, Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe, Frayne Williams called The Life and Adventures a "curious quasi-metaphysical fantasy."³³ If Lawrence truly meant his allegory to show that Bacon was Shakespeare, then he was the first Baconian.

There are many, however, who contend that the first real Baconian was the Reverend James Wilmot, D. D. Reverend Wilmot alleged that he found similarities of thought between

³¹Some scholars place the date for this book in 1772.

³²Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

³³Williams, op. cit., p. 248.

Bacon and Shakespeare and concluded that one must have borrowed from the other.³⁴ He made the assertion in 1785, but it did not receive any attention at the time. However, the date of his claim was authenticated in 1805 and 1813.³⁵ In 1933, George Sydenham Clarke (Lord Sydenham of Combe) proposed Wilmot as the first real Baconian and found many followers for his belief. The probable reason so many believe as Clarke did is that Wilmot did not use allegory but spoke out clearly for his belief in Bacon's authorship. The fact that Wilmot was born exactly one hundred years after the death of Bacon is also important to the Baconians, who find great significance in such trifles.³⁶

In the following year, 1786, another allegory appeared. It was written by "an officer of the Royal Navy" and was called The Story of the Learned Pig. This allegory referred to the authorship controversy in a fable told by a pig who had gained possession of a human body and had written some plays. Later the Baconians were very quick to see the relationship between "Bacon" and "Pig," although, from what the author of this study can gather, the account was much more flattering to Shakespeare than it was to Bacon.

³⁴ These similarities of thought are the common belief of all Baconians, and they will be illustrated in Chapter III.

³⁵ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 2.

³⁶ Churchill, op. cit., pp. 263-64.

The next recorded reference to Shakespeare's authorship was made in 1805 by James Corton Cowell in a paper which he read before the Ipswich Philosophic Society. Crowell had been doing research for ten years in the area where Shakespeare had lived and worked, and he had found very little evidence to prove that Shakespeare had written the plays. He hinted that he thought Bacon was the author. Crowell's paper had nothing to do with the controversy; it was heard only by those present at the meeting and was preserved only in manuscript form. It was first published in 1932 in The London Times Literary Supplement by Professor Allardyce Nicoll.³⁷

Doubt of Shakespeare's authorship was once again expressed in 1837, this time in fiction. In Chapter LXXVI, Volume II of his novel Venetia, Benjamin Disraeli had Cadurcis, one of his characters, ask: "And who is Shakespeare?" "We know of him as much as we do of Homer. Did he write half the plays attributed to him? Did he ever write a single play? I doubt it."³⁸ It is not known whether Disraeli actually believed Shakespeare did not write the Works, and if so whether he had a candidate for the authorship, or whether he was engaged in the deflationary

³⁷ Allardyce Nicoll, "The First Baconian," The London Times Literary Supplement, February 25, 1932, p. 128.

³⁸ Benjamin Disraeli, Venetia (Volume XI of Earl's edition. 20 vols.; New York: M. Walter Durne, 1904), II, 154.

anti-heroics of the period. In any case, the novel did not arouse public interest in the controversy. Then, in 1848, Joseph Hart, who had been in the American Consular Service, published a book entitled The Romance of Yachting.³⁹ Full of digressions, the book had very little to say about boats of any kind. At one point, after describing a yachting trip, Hart suddenly began questioning Shakespeare's authorship. Shakespeare, said Hart, was not the equal of the literary men of his day, and no one was more aware of it than Shakespeare. According to Hart, Nicholas Rowe,⁴⁰ and a player named Betterton found a stack of printed copies of plays in an attic. There was no author's name on these plays, and when Rowe said he needed an author, Betterton suggested Shakespeare. Thus did Rowe build the Shakespeare myth. It was Hart's belief that Shakespeare added only the vulgar and spicy parts of the plays. Hart did not openly name an author, although he implied that it was Ben Jonson, and his only interest seemed to have been to render justice and to give credit where it was due.⁴¹ Some public notice was given to Hart's ideas.

³⁹ Joseph C. Hart, The Romance of Yachting (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1848).

⁴⁰ Nicholas Rowe was the first editor of Shakespeare; his edition of the Shakespeare plays was published in 1709.

⁴¹ Alfred van Rensselaer Westfall, American Shakespearean Criticism (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1939), pp. 286-88.

In the August 15, 1852 issue of Chamber's Edinburgh Journal there appeared an anonymous article entitled "Who Wrote Shakespeare?" No author for the Works was named, but a suggestion was made that Shakespeare had someone do his writing for him.⁴²

None of the aforementioned articles and books attracted any public attention worthy of note at the time they were written, but the possibility of a controversy was growing. The lack of details about Shakespeare's life and education, the ferment and confusion of the period in which he lived, and the almost hysterical praise of the Romantic period for his philosophy and learning were too much to be ignored by some people. When, in 1856, Delia Bacon of America and William Henry Smith of England individually made public their belief that Sir Francis Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare Works, they started a reaction which has produced many theories, counter-theories, and refutations.

⁴²Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 3.

CHAPTER III

THE BACONIAN THEORIES

The oldest and most persistent theories of authorship are those which contend that Sir Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, is the author of the Shakespeare Works. If sheer staying power and mass of "evidence" were proof of authorship, Bacon would be accepted as "Shakespeare." The writings about Bacon exceed the combined writings about all of the other contenders. Charlatans, so-called "crack-pots," and great men, such as Mark Twain, Justice Nathaniel Holmes, and Lord Palmerston have been attracted to the Baconian camp.

Any possibility that this theory might be seriously considered and investigated by scholars has been lost because of the lack of restraint shown by many of the Baconians, some of whom contended that Bacon wrote not only the Shakespeare Works, but also the works attributed to Spenser, Marlowe, Greene, and most of the other Elizabethan writers. A few extremists offered "proof" that Bacon also wrote the works ascribed to Defoe and Swift. If one were to take all of the Baconian theories seriously, he would find that every piece of literature he picked up which was written between 1550 and 1650 to 1700 was the work of Francis Bacon. Even Montaigne was not allowed to rest in peace. John Fiske, in his essay "Forty Years of the Bacon-Shakespeare Folly,"

showed the absurdity of the situation when he said that the Baconians were sure that Bacon "was the author of Montaigne's Essays, which were afterward translated into what we have always supposed to be the French original."¹

The Baconians had a tendency to be amused at the lack of agreement among the Shakespeareans, yet they too disagreed on important points of their own theories, a fact which serves to detract from any importance that may be attached to their work.

In spite of the many absurd aspects and the lack of restraint and agreement often shown in the Baconian theories, they are the most important of all of the authorship theories, and, for that reason, they are the first to be discussed fully in this study. It will be the purpose of this chapter (1) to discuss, very briefly, Bacon's life and accomplishments; (2) to make a chronological survey of the various theories offered by the Baconians; and (3) to refute, when possible, those theories which need refutation. It will be necessary to divide the survey section into two parts. The theories that Bacon put a cipher into the plays which identified him as the author are more numerous than the less dramatic theories in which the Baconians found other means of

¹John Fiske, "Forty Years of the Bacon-Shakespeare Folly," A Century of Science and Other Essays (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899), p. 403.

identifying the author. Therefore, the first part of the survey section will be concerned with the simpler theories, and the second and larger part will be concerned with the cipher theories. The latter will be discussed in more detail since they are the more interesting.

I. SIR FRANCIS BACON

The anti-Shakespeareans, especially the Baconians, contended that the author of the Works was a man with an extensive education which included a knowledge of law and philosophy among other things and that he was a nobleman who was familiar with the ways of the nobles and the Court. A brief look below at the biography of Bacon demonstrates that he filled these qualifications.

Francis Bacon, son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, lord-keeper of the great seal, was born on January 22, 1561, in London at York House in the Strand. At twelve, he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, and, at fifteen, returned to London to study law. He was admitted to the bar in 1582 and elected to Parliament in 1584. He was made Queen's Counsel in 1598, but he did not seem to be in good standing with Elizabeth, for he advanced very slowly during her reign. Under James I, however, he received many honors and responsibilities: in 1603, he was knighted; he became solicitor-general in 1607, attorney-general in 1613, privy-councilor in 1616, and lord-keeper in 1617; in 1618, he was created Bacon Verulam and

became lord-chancellor; in 1621, he was created Viscount St. Albans. That same year, however, he was charged with corruption in office, confessed, and was fined and imprisoned. He died five years later of a chill contracted during a scientific experiment.²

Even with all of his public service, Bacon was not deterred from the plan of thinking and writing which he had set for himself. The plan was far too ambitious for any one man to complete in a lifetime, but Bacon finished enough of it to insure himself a place as a leading philosopher. His plan was this: (1) to study every science in existence; (2) to develop a completely new method of scientific investigation and inquiry; and (3) to reconstruct all knowledge by applying this new method. He left behind three important works on this subject: The Advancement of Learning, completed in 1605; Novum Organum, completed in 1620; and De Augmentis Scientiarum, completed in 1623. Bacon's New Atlantis, which was started in 1624, uncompleted at his death, and published in 1627, outlined in allegory a plan for a society of scientists. The Royal Society, founded in 1662 by Charles II, was just such a society.³

² Thomas Fowler, "Sir Francis Bacon," Dictionary of National Biography, Sir Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, editors (London: University of Oxford Press, H. Milford, 1921-1922), I, 800-32.

³ Homer A. Watt and William W. Watt, "Francis Bacon," A Dictionary of English Literature (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1945), pp. 13-14.

These philosophic treatises--for they are more philosophic than scientific--are not so popular with the layman as are his Essays. The essays were written for Bacon's own amusement from ideas he had collected in a memorandum book. The first group, published in 1597, showed the influence of Montaigne; the other two groups, published in 1612 and 1625, showed more reliance on himself than on anyone else.⁴

That Bacon was continuously occupied by his public works and scientific writings can be seen in the foregoing account. Since he did not complete his plan for a new scientific method, it would not be inappropriate to ask here when he found time to write all of the plays, poems, and sonnets in the Works.

II. CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE SIMPLE THEORIES

The earliest of the authorship theories have been discussed in Chapter II. Since these theories did not come before the general public, the history of the controversy did not begin until half way through the nineteenth century.

Then in 1856, the controversy became public. In the January, 1856 issue of Putnam's Magazine, there appeared an unsigned article titled "William Shakspeare and His Plays: An Inquiry Concerning Them." It was written by Delia Bacon,

⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

a Boston schoolteacher, and no relation to Sir Francis Bacon.

In this article, she regretted

The spectacle--the stupendous spectacle--of a nation referring the origin of its drama--a drama more noble, and subtle than the Greek--to the invention--the accidental, unconscious invention--of a stupid, ignorant, illiterate, third-rate Play-actor.⁵

The Baconians have since given much credit to Miss Bacon as being one of them, but actually she was a Disintegrationist as she believed that Bacon was only one of several who collaborated on the Works.

In that same year, William Henry Smith of England published a letter which he had written to Lord Ellesmere entitled "Was Lord Bacon the Author of Shakespeare's Plays?"⁶ This letter drew replies in several newspapers, and the ideas in it were expanded into a book, Bacon and Shakespeare: An Inquiry Touching Players, Playhouses, and Playwriters in the Days of Elizabeth, which appeared in 1857.⁷ In that same

⁵ Alfred van Besselaer Westfall, American Shakespeare Criticism (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1939), pp. 288-89, citing Delia Bacon, "William Shakspeare and His Plays: An Inquiry Concerning Them," Putnam's Monthly, VII (January, 1856), pp. 1-19.

⁶ William Henry Smith, "Was Lord Bacon the Author of Shakespeare's Plays?" Littell's Living Age, LI (August, 1856), 481-85.

⁷ William Henry Smith, Bacon and Shakespeare: An Inquiry Touching Players, Playhouses, and Playwriters in the Days of Elizabeth (London: J. R. Smith, 1857).

year, Miss Bacon also expanded her ideas into a book, The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakspeare Unfolded.⁸

There was immediate turmoil. Miss Bacon and her adherents accused Smith of plagiarism. Smith replied that he had never heard of Miss Bacon until he saw her name in the review of his letter to Lord Ellesmere. Furthermore, said Smith, he had held the Baconian viewpoint for over twenty years before he published his letter.⁹ In spite of the facts that William Henry Smith was not heard from again and that Delia Bacon died in a mental institution, the controversy was now before the public and was attracting much attention and many adherents.¹⁰ It is not important which of these two people was the first to present the Baconian theory, although most give Miss Bacon credit, if credit it can be called. What is important is the controversy they started.

Shakespeare's first defender, George Henry Townsend, published William Shakespeare, Not an Imposter toward the

⁸ Delia Bacon, The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakspeare Unfolded (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1847).

⁹ Years later, a former student of the American claimant said that Miss Bacon had been presenting the anti-Shakespearean theory in her classes before 1850. See Westfall, op. cit., pp. 290-91.

¹⁰ A full discussion of Miss Bacon's life and quest for the true author can be found in Appendix B.

end of 1857, probably in answer to the Bacon-Smith arguments.¹¹

The next published work to advocate the Bacon theory was a novel written by William D. O'Connor and entitled Harrington: A Story of True Love.¹² It was published in 1860 and dealt with the period of the Fugitive Slave Law. The hero, Harrington, advocated the Baconian theory, and, in a note at the end of the novel, O'Connor acknowledged and lauded Delia Bacon's efforts as an anti-Shakespearean.

The Baconians first began to receive serious attention in 1866. Prior to that date, those in the Baconian camp were either unknown or considered literary "crackpots." But in 1866, a judge of the Missouri supreme court, Justice Nathaniel Holmes, entered the controversy on the side of the Baconians with his two-volume work, The Authorship of Shakespeare.¹³ Holmes presented many parallelisms between the Shakespeare Works and the writings of Bacon; he also illustrated by example his belief that Shakespeare did not possess the kind or amount of knowledge shown in the plays.

¹¹George Henry Townsend, William Shakespeare, Not An Imposter (London: G. Routledge and Company, 1857).

¹²William D. O'Connor, Harrington: A Story of True Love (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860).

¹³Nathaniel Holmes, The Authorship of Shakespeare (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1866).

Because he was a serious man of law presenting logical arguments, Holmes' work attracted so much attention that it went into a fourth edition in 1886. The Baconians now had someone of importance in their camp.

In the February, 1879 issue of Appleton's Journal an unsigned article attacked the commoner, Shakespeare. The author stated that he did not see how so common a man as Shakespeare, who took part in common everyday pursuits, could have written the plays. The article conveyed the idea that genius such as that displayed in the Works was above the ordinary, everyday business of life.¹⁴

In 1883, Constance M. (Mrs. Henry) Pott was inspired to do an exhaustive editing of Sir Francis Bacon's Commonplace Book, which she called The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies; Private Notes, circ. 1594, hitherto unpublished; illustrated by passages from Shakespeare.¹⁵ Mrs. Pott's work was as ponderous as her title. She showed parallelisms between the Shakespeare Works and Bacon's Commonplace Book and touched on a cipher theory.¹⁶

¹⁴ Frayne Williams, Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1941), p. 250.

¹⁵ Constance M. Pott, The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies; Private Notes, circ. 1594, hitherto unpublished; illustrated by passages from Shakespeare (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1883).

¹⁶ There will be further discussion of Mrs. Pott's work in Section III of this chapter.

The majority of Shakespearean scholars seemed determined to ignore the controversy. Some, however, answered the allegations of the Baconians. One such person was Richard Grant White, an American Shakespearean scholar, philologist, essayist, and journalist. In 1886, he denounced the Baconians in an essay entitled "The Bacon-Shakespeare Craze" in his Studies in Shakespeare (pp. 151-82). He spared nothing in his attack on the Baconians in general and on Mrs. Pott's Promus in particular. At one point, he said, "When symptoms of the Bacon-Shakespeare craze manifest themselves, the patient should be immediately carried off to an asylum . . ."¹⁷

The next major step in the Baconian controversy was made by a Minnesota politician named Ignatius Donnelly. In 1888, he published his nine hundred and ninety-eight page book, The Great Crystagram, in which he presented a cipher theory.¹⁸ Donnelly's cipher will be examined in more detail in Section III of this chapter. It is sufficient to say here that his theory caused a great stir among the Baconians, and he was elevated to a position of importance among them.

¹⁷ James Phinney Baxter, The Greatest of Literary Problems (second edition; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1917), p. xxvii citing Richard Grant White, "The Bacon-Shakespeare Craze," Studies in Shakespeare (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1886), pp. 151-82.

¹⁸ Ignatius Donnelly, The Great Cryptogram (Chicago: R. S. Peele and Company, 1887).

Later, however, when the furor over his "discoveries" had subsided, it was found that his work did not prove valid under close examination, and he was a disappointment to the Baconians.¹⁹

A high in absurdity was reached in 1891 by John Elisha Roe in The Mortal Moon; or Bacon and His Masks: The Defoe Period Unmasked.²⁰ Not content to picture Bacon as the author of most of the literary works of the Elizabethan period and even some of the works of the Jacobean period, Roe took Sir Francis almost one hundred years beyond the date of his death. He decided that an ignorant tinker named John Bunyan could not have written such a near-perfect allegory as Pilgrim's Progress, but that Bacon had the ability to write it and did so. Roe also suggested that Bacon wrote Robinson Crusoe and "The Tale of a Tub." Since Bacon had been dead for fifty-two years when Pilgrim's Progress was published, ninety-three years when Robinson Crusoe was published, and seventy-eight years when "The Tale of a Tub" was published, Roe's theory has an aura of the supernatural about it. He also added the names Philip Stubbs, Robert Burton, and

¹⁹ J. M. Robertson, "William Shakespeare: The Bacon-Shakespeare Theory," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1957 ed.), XX, 448.

²⁰ J. E. Roe, The Mortal Moon; or Bacon and His Masks: The Defoe Period Unmasked (New York: Burr Printing House, 1891).

Addison and Steele to the list of authors behind whom Bacon masked. All this, of course, was in addition to the Shakespeare Works. (It might be noted here that in 1918, Roe added the names John Milton, Oliver Cromwell, Thomas Hobbes, and Thomas Carlyle to the list as authors whose works Bacon had written; these names appeared in Sir Francis Bacon's Own Story.)²¹

The nineteenth century became the twentieth century, and Baconian theories continued to appear regularly.

In 1902, Judge T. E. Webb's book, The Mystery of William Shakespeare: A Summary of Evidence, appeared.²²

Judge Webb's origin and judicial jurisdiction (if any) are a mystery to the author of this study, but he is described by Andrew Lang in Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown as being very, very old and, Lang implied, senile. Some of Judge Webb's statements revealed that he lacked acquaintance with the Works. At one point, for example, he wrote: "The habits of the author could not have been more scholastic if he had, like Bacon, spent three years in the University of Cambridge . . ."²³ In answer to this assertion, Lang stated

²¹J. E. Roe, Sir Francis Bacon's Own Story (Rochester: privately published, 1918).

²²T. E. Webb, The Mystery of William Shakespeare: A Summary of Evidence (London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1902).

²³Andrew Lang, Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown (London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1912), p. 126, citing T. E. Webb.

that the wit and the knowledge of the Court could have been read in any popular English writing of the day; no scholar as serious as Bacon would have mixed chronology as the author of the plays did.²⁴ Later in his book, Judge Webb said, ". . . the author could not have been more familiar with French politics if, like Bacon, he had spent three years in the train of an ambassador to France."²⁵ He was, in this case, referring to Love's Labour's Lost. To this, Lang replied:

The French politics, in the play (Love's Labour's Lost), are to send the daughter of a King of France (the contemporary King Henri III was childless) to conduct a negotiation about 200,000 ducats, at the Court, steeped in peace, of a King of Navarre, a scholar who would fain be a recluse in an Academe of his own device. Such was not the Navarre of Henri in his war with the Guises, and Henri did not shun sex!

Such are the "contemporary foreign politics," and the "French politics" which the author knows--as intimately as Bacon might have known them. They are not foreign politics, they are the politics of fairyland: with which Will was at least as familiar as Bacon.²⁶

These examples are sufficient to show that Judge Webb was no Shakespearean scholar, but, because he bore the title of "Judge," he was revered as an authority by the Baconians. When he insisted that Ben Jonson's references to Shakespeare were falsehoods, written and spoken to help cover the authorship hoax, the Judge was supposedly giving authority to what the Baconians already believed. The fact that he was old,

²⁴ Ibid., p. 130.

²⁵ Cited in Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

probably senile, and lacking in scholarship did not deter them from elevating him to a pedestal as an authority.

In the same year in which Judge Webb published his ideas (1902), Lord Penzance produced Lord Penzance on the Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy: A Judicial Summing Up.²⁷

Lord Penzance dismissed Ignatius Donnelly's cipher theory, but he accepted Donnelly's simpler procedure of deducing the identity of the author from the way he used very common words and phrases.²⁸ Lord Penzance produced no new evidence.

The famous American author and humorist, Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) became a convert to Baconian ideas, and, in 1909, he wrote Is Shakespeare Dead?²⁹ His style and his tone were facetious and exaggerated, much the same as those he used in his criticism of James Fenimore Cooper ("Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses"). Twain's major thesis can be summed up in a few simple words: a lout such as Shakespeare was would be totally incapable of writing the Works.

²⁷James Plaisted Wilde, Baron Penzance, Lord Penzance on the Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy: A Judicial Summing Up (London: S. Low, Marston, and Company, Ltd., 1902).

²⁸Robertson, loc. cit.

²⁹Samuel L. Clemens, Is Shakespeare Dead? (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1909).

Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence came into the controversy in 1919, and the title of his book indicates his strong belief: Bacon is Shake-speare.³⁰ Durning-Lawrence pointed out that Bacon's greatest desire was "to create an English Language capable of expressing the highest thoughts."³¹ R. C. Churchill, in his article on the controversy in Nineteenth Century and After, pointed out that Durning-Lawrence had refuted the Baconian theory by mentioning this fact. Bacon did express the highest thoughts, but Shakespeare expressed the highest emotions.³²

Durning-Lawrence also contended that Dutch publishers, in producing Latin versions of Bacon's Henry VII in 1642 and The Advancement of Learning in 1645, included engraved title pages which probably showed Bacon had written a number of plays which he had ordered sponsored by an actor. Unfortunately, Durning-Lawrence did not explain why the Dutch would conceal Bacon's authorship between fifteen and twenty years after he had died. Durning-Lawrence further said that Bacon

³⁰ Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Bacon Is Shake-speare (New York: The John McBride Company, 1910). Durning-Lawrence's book is primarily concerned with the long word anagram and will be discussed in more detail in Section III of this chapter.

³¹ R. C. Churchill, "Baconian Heresy: A Post-Mortem," Nineteenth Century and After, 140 (November, 1946), 266, citing Edwin Durning-Lawrence.

³² Ibid.

had written the essays of Montaigne as schoolboy exercises in French.

Further heights of absurdity were reached in 1912 when Parker Woodward published Tudor Problems.³³ Woodward was of the opinion that Bacon had masked himself behind more than one author. The list of authors whose works, he said, were written by Bacon is a literary Who's Who of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: Lyly, Greene, Spenser, Shakespeare, Kyd, Peele, Marlowe, Gasson, Bright, Burton, Webbe, Nashe, Watson, and others, including a part of Ben Jonson's works.³⁴ No comment on this theory is necessary.

In 1914, E. G. Harman, the author of Edmund Spenser and Other Improvisations of Francis Bacon, spent five hundred and ninety-two pages trying to prove Bacon wrote not only all of the Shakespeare Works and the works of other Elizabethans, but all of the Spenser works as well.³⁵

In the following year (1915), James Phinney Baxter published The Greatest of Literary Problems.³⁶ According to

³³Parker Woodward, Tudor Problems (London: Gay and Hancock, Ltd., 1912).

³⁴C. F. Tucker Brooke, Shakespeare of Stratford (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 143.

³⁵E. G. Harman, Edmund Spenser and Other Improvisations of Francis Bacon (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1914).

³⁶James Phinney Baxter, The Greatest of Literary Problems (second edition; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917).

the title page, the book was to be "an exploration of all points at issue, from their inception to the present moment." Because of the great mass of writings which had been produced by the Baconians up to that time, just such a book as Baxter's purported to be was needed; an unbiased, objective view of the controversy was essential. Unfortunately, Baxter's book was biased and subjective; his approach was unmistakably Baconian.

In his introduction, Baxter criticized such Shakespearean scholars as Lee, White, Collins, and Furnivall for their "cruel" comments and criticisms of the Baconians, and throughout the remainder of the book, he scoffed at the Shakespearean scholars and their work with the same cruelty of which he had accused them. His examination of their work was unscholarly, and it was more often inaccurate than not. Baxter also discussed relics, Bacon's life and works, the Northumberland Manuscript, the Sonnets, the Rosicrucian fellowship, symbolism, signatures, Spenser, the masks of Bacon, thumb marks, and the ciphers. He emerged from his study with the same opinion he held when he entered it: Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare Works.

Baxter's "summary" of Baconism marked a slowing down in the production of the simple, less spectacular Baconian theories. Perhaps the greatest single factor in this decrease in production was the sudden appearance of other contenders for the authorship. Bacon had been the only contender for

over fifty years; suddenly there were as many as fifteen others. Very little that was new could be added to the simple theories;³⁷ ciphers were the only thing which could overshadow the excitement caused by new contenders.

The simple theories have faded from prominence, but they have not died. As recently as 1945, W. S. Melsome published The Bacon-Shakespeare Anatomy with the intended purpose of bolstering the Baconian position. The arguments in his book were based on the parallelisms between the works of Bacon and the Works of Shakespeare; he contended that there were so many parallelisms that the possibility of coincidence was ruled out. The most significant point to him was that Shakespeare "borrowed" heavily from De Augmentis Scientiarum, which was published in October, 1623, when Shakespeare had been dead for seven years. Bacon did not need to wait for De Augmentis in order to write the plays.

Melsome's work is undoubtedly not the last of the simple Baconian theories. At any time, a new book or essay may appear which will offer conclusive "proof" that Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare Works.

III. CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE CIPHER THEORIES

Almost thirty years after Delia Bacon and William Henry Smith brought the Baconian theory into prominence, the

³⁷ "Simple theories" refer to those less dramatic theories which did not use ciphers to prove the authorship.

first cipher (or cryptographic) theory of Bacon's authorship appeared.³⁸ Running chronologically parallel to the simple theories, the cipher theories are responsible for much of the literature of the controversy. One reason for their popularity lies in the fact that the plays are an unending source of possible ciphers, anagrams, and other word puzzles. Almost any amateur cryptologist can find almost any message he desires in the plays.

It will be the purpose of this section to examine some of the many cipher theories. Included will be the most important of the cryptographic approaches to the controversy: the ciphers in the plays, the ciphers in Shakespeare's epitaph, the anagrams of names and of the long word in Love's Labour's Lost, and numerology. These different types of cryptographic arguments will be examined separately in their chronological order to prevent misunderstanding and confusion.

Because this study is primarily a chronological survey, the discussion of the ciphers will not be technical and involved; in most cases, only the findings will be examined and the refutation presented.

The greatest problem of the controversy has always been the inability of the anti-Shakespeareans and the

³⁸ The cryptographic approach has enjoyed its greatest popularity among the Baconians; however, it has occasionally been used by those representing other contenders.

Shakespeareans to prove their theories and refutations. For example, the anti-Shakespeareans may state that Shakespeare did not have a university education and therefore could not have written the Works; the Shakespeareans may answer that he didn't need a university education because he had a natural genius. Neither side can prove its allegation; the only person who could offer any concrete information has been dead for three hundred and forty-three years. There is one segment of the controversy, however, which can be examined scientifically: the cryptographic arguments. It was not until 1957, however, that a thorough, scientific study was made of the cipher theories. It was done by William and Elizabeth Friedman in a book which they called The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined. Both of the Friedmans are distinguished cryptologists; Colonel Friedman has received Presidential awards and recognition by Congress for work he has done in cryptography for national defense before, during, and after the Second World War, while Mrs. Friedman has worked with the United States and Canadian governments and the International Monetary Fund as a cryptologist.³⁹ Both Colonel and Mrs. Friedman are highly qualified to examine the Shakespearean ciphers and to pass judgment on them. Because their

³⁹William F. Friedman and Elizabeth S. Friedman, The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), information on the dust jacket.

book is the only scientifically sound work on the subject, it will be used extensively in discussing and refuting the cipher theories examined in this study.

The object of the Friedmans' work was not to prove the claims of either side of the controversy but to settle the dispute one way or the other as far as the ciphers were concerned. To accomplish this, they set up two criteria by which to judge all of the cipher theories. In order for a cipher to be valid, there had to be a positive answer to these two questions, which were their criteria: (1) Do the plain-texts make sense--that is, are they linguistically valid? (2) Can the cryptosystem and the specific keys be applied without ambiguity?⁴⁰ These two questions were applied to all of those cryptographic arguments examined by Colonel and Mrs. Friedman.

Ciphers in the plays. The first cryptographic argument was presented by Mrs. C. F. Ashmead Windle in San Francisco in 1882. The title was very impressive: Report to the British Museum on Behalf of the Annals of Great Britain and The Reign of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, Discovery and Opening of the Cipher of Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Alike in His Prose Writings and in the 'Shakespeare' Dramas Proving Him the Author of the Dramas. Mrs. Windle's pamphlet was privately

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

printed in San Francisco in 1882. She attempted to find significance in puns on words, names, and titles in the Works. What she found was not really a cipher, and her work is important only because it was the first cryptographic argument.

In the following year (1883), Mrs. Henry Pott brought out her Promus of Formularies and Elegancies.⁴¹ Mrs. Pott was said by Ignatius Donnelly to have examined "six thousand works anterior to or contemporary with Bacon."⁴² In spite of her wide reading, Mrs. Pott's work was not scientifically valid. Among her other findings was the following message taken from the poem, "To the Reader" in the First Folio: "Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Alban, Shakespeare, writ these plaies, not the rogue will Shakspeare."⁴³ Mrs. Pott never clarified her system, and her work was discounted by all but the Baconians long before the Friedmans' book appeared.

It was not until Ignatius Donnelly entered the controversy that the cipher theories achieved a certain color and gaudiness. The Pott cipher was insignificant and on a small scale; the Donnelly cipher was flamboyant and on a grand scale.

⁴¹For the complete title of this work and additional discussion of Mrs. Pott's ideas, see page 48.

⁴²Donnelly, op. cit., p. 931. Italics in the original.

⁴³Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 109.

Ignatius Donnelly was a politician, farmer, lawyer, land speculator, and author from Minnesota, who had been lieutenant-governor of his state, a United States Congressman, and even a vice-presidential candidate of the People's Party. He was never noted for his modesty or for his quiet, unassuming ways, and he probably saw the Baconian theory as a means to attract attention. Although his theory was not accepted by scholars or even by most Baconians after the furor over its subject matter had died down, Donnelly should not be slighted. His cipher story was the first major effort to use cryptography to disprove Shakespeare's authorship, and it is an example of the lengths to which many of the anti-Shakespeareans went (and are still going) to prove their theories.

Donnelly first stated in 1884 that he thought there was a cipher in the plays. In June of 1887, he published an article in North American Review, which he called "The Shakespeare Myth."⁴⁴ In this article, he drew many parallels between Bacon and Shakespeare, and he showed that he had found a cipher in the Works. He made this cipher of his say what he wanted it to say. Almost anyone, however, can do the same thing.⁴⁵ It would be just as easy for the author of

⁴⁴Ignatius Donnelly, "The Shakespeare Myth," North American Review, 164 (June, 1887), 572.

⁴⁵George Bernard Shaw later made a cipher which proved he was the author of the Shakespeare Works. Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 251.

this study to "prove" that anyone from King Henry VIII to Dylan Thomas was the author.

Donnelly's most pretentious work was his nine hundred and ninety-eight page book, The Great Cryptogram, which was published in 1888.⁴⁶ It was divided into three parts: Book I, The Argument; Book II, The Demonstration (in which "the great cryptogram" was presented); and Book III, Conclusions. Devoting a chapter to each, Donnelly discussed identical expressions, metaphors, opinions, quotations, studies, errors, and identities of character and style found in Bacon's writings and the Shakespeare Works.

Donnelly had an argument for everything. For example, he got around Bacon's busy public life by saying the Works appeared "during Bacon's unemployed youth. No one pretends that he wrote plays while he was holding great and lucrative offices in the state."⁴⁷ The obvious fallacy of this statement lies in the fact that in his "unemployed youth," Bacon must have been getting the education necessary to write the plays, an education which the Baconians insist the author had. There are other examples of Donnelly's "reasoning" throughout his book.

⁴⁶Though the book was spectacular and was welcomed by the Baconians, it was a financial failure.

⁴⁷Donnelly, op. cit., p. 289.

The beginning of Donnelly's discussion of his cipher was a mixture of autobiography and pseudo-scientific introductory material. He discovered Bacon's biliteral cipher in a book which belonged to his young son, concluded that Bacon had put a cipher in the plays, and set out to find it. He had difficulty in discovering the simple message he knew was there until he decided that the First Folio contained the answer. Obtaining a copy of the Staunton facsimile, he set to work. After several failures, he tried an arithmetical method and was "astonished" at the results he obtained. Instead of a short message which definitely stated Bacon's authorship, he found a long narrative which told the story of Bacon's life and activities.

Donnelly's method of obtaining the message was complicated; he further complicated it by finding significance in brackets, hyphenated words, and additional numbers which he obtained from wherever he could find them without regard for the numbers he used for his keys. However, since this is not a technical study of cryptography, only the results of Donnelly's work are important. Those results are rather astounding. With his cipher, Donnelly found many long messages in the Works: there was one in which Cecil told the story of Marlowe; there were several others in which Bacon told the story of Shakespeare, his youth, his prison sentence (there is neither fact nor tradition in Shakespearean scholarship to offer any proof of this), his aristocratic

pretensions, and his inability to have written the plays; there were still other messages in which Bacon told the story of his own life and its relation to the history of the times. At no time in the cipher stories did Bacon assert the authorship of the plays. If Bacon were perpetrating a fraud, he concluded, he would have "found" a sentence which stated straightforwardly that Bacon was the author.

The Friedmans examined Donnelly's findings. Their first conclusion was that Donnelly did not understand the nature of Bacon's biliteral cipher:⁴⁸ he relied on chance associations of words, and he worked with great irregularity with what he had. The Friedmans then applied their two criteria for the validity of a cipher.⁴⁹ They found that the plain-texts made sense linguistically, and that, in spelling, syntax, and intelligibility, they were correct. It was on the second of the criteria that Donnelly's cipher failed; there was no true key to his cipher. He selected his key words and numbers without any rules for the selection, and he used them or ignored them at will. The Friedmans reached the following conclusion:

In fact, Donnelly's system is no system; it leaves a scientifically unacceptable latitude in the exercise of choice on the part of the decipherer. More plainly, it provides him with a means of justifying retrospectively

⁴⁸ A discussion of the true Bacon biliteral cipher can be found in Chapter I, p. 5.

⁴⁹ See page 61 of this study for a discussion of these two criteria.

his selection of words . . . The system by which he reached . . . (the message he found) . . . was never mentioned by Bacon, its like has never been proposed by a serious writer on cryptography at any time, and it cannot be accepted by any such writer now or in the future.⁵⁰

Following the publication of Donnelly's work, there was an increase in the number of people who studied the Shakespeare Works with the purpose of denying Shakespeare's authorship. The beauty and the ideas to be found in the plays, poems, and sonnets did not interest them; they were looking for a cipher of some kind.

The next major cipher theory appeared in 1893. It was presented by Orville Owen, M. D., of Detroit, who may have been inspired by Donnelly's work on the subject. Owen completed and published five volumes of a proposed six-volume work, which he called Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story.⁵¹ The whole message was written in blank verse, and it was extremely difficult to read. Dr. Owen claimed to have discovered a cipher which proved that Bacon was the illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, and that Bacon was the author of the plays of William Shakespeare, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and George Peele, the works of Edmund Spenser and

⁵⁰ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 45.

⁵¹ Orville Owen, Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story (Detroit: Howard Publishing Company, 1894). The sixth volume is still in manuscript form.

Sir Philip Sidney,⁵² and Burton's The Anatomy of Melancholy. The cipher also revealed a detailed account of historical events of the period, some of which have never been known to historians.

Dr. Owen's whole cipher story is quite remarkable and is, in some ways, quite unusual. The most unusual aspect is "Sir Francis Bacon's Letter to the Decipherer." Ordinarily, it would not be strange to find a letter to the decipherer; how else could the message be found? What makes this one unusual is that it is part of the cipher contained in the text of the Works. The decipherer has to decipher the Works in order to find the way to decipher the Works. The Friedmans compared it to picking the lock of a safe to find inside the key to the lock which has already been picked.⁵³

Owen's cipher story was constructed by taking words, lines, and passages from the Works of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Greene, Peele, Spenser, Sidney, and Bacon, and from Burton's The Anatomy of Melancholy. He also used a work written in Latin by Bacon and translated by Rawley twenty-two years after Bacon died. These words, lines, and passages made up a fairly coherent narrative which followed along the lines Owen wanted it to follow. This narrative was a history of England during

⁵² An interesting aspect of the controversy is found in the fact that the Baconians argued that the hog depicted on the crest which appears on the title page of Sidney's Arcadia is irrefutable proof of Bacon's authorship of that work.

⁵³ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 63.

Bacon's lifetime, and it contained "proof" that Bacon wrote the works of the above named writers.

Owen was aided in his task by a giant wheel which he built by following the instructions set forth by Bacon in "The Letter to the Decipherer." This machine was described in detail by the Friedmans:

The machine consists of two spools, rather like oversized cinema reels, pivoted to spin freely; stretched between them, and wound round them, are 11000 feet of canvas. Glued to this canvas the 11000 or so pages of selected texts in turn come into view as the spools rotate, the whole contraption providing an extended anthology of Elizabethan writings.⁵⁴

To find the message, it was necessary to rotate the wheel and find certain key words and their derivations; these were used to locate the words, lines, and passages necessary to construct the message.

An interesting sidelight on the Owen cipher theory is the story of his search for documentary proof of his discovery. After one of the several visits paid him by the spirit of Bacon, Owen became convinced that Bacon had hidden proof of his authorship in an iron box at the bottom of the Wye River in Chepstow. Bacon's little iron box was never found by Dr. Owen or his converts, but Owen never stopped believing that it was buried somewhere in England.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 67.

⁵⁵ Williams, op. cit., p. 255.

Although there are people who still believe in Dr. Owen and his word cipher, an examination of his work shows that his approach was unscientific; there are many inconsistencies and omissions in his methods. The first weakness is that the decipherer had to decipher in order to get the instructions to decipher the message. The "Letter to the Decipherer" does not stand up under scientific examination: there is no general system, there are no specific keys, and there are no clear rules for applying the keys. According to the "Letter," the plays were not written for production but for the primary purpose of concealing a cipher.⁵⁶

In the text of the message itself, it is easy to see that the approach Owen used was not scientific; rather, it was haphazard. He had to find one of his key words (or one of its derivatives) and then look for a suitable word, line, or passage somewhere nearby which fitted his story. Sometimes the word, line, or passage he needed was not even on the same page as the key word.

Another great fault of Dr. Owen's theory was the inaccuracy of the texts he employed. He never gave the exact source of the quotation he used, and he changed words in these quotations to enable him to get the message he wanted.

⁵⁶Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 68.

An example of this can be shown in the following lines from The Merchant of Venice:

Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey
To win thee, lady . . . Act II, Scene 1, line 30.

Dr. Owen changed this to read as he wanted it to read:

Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey
To win a cipher . . .

This is only one example of this kind of thing. Faced with these faults, the thinking person can readily see that Owen's cipher was not really a cipher and actually proved nothing except the scope of Dr. Owen's imagination and inventiveness.⁵⁷

The next cipher theory to appear was a very important one: it was based on Francis Bacon's biliteral cipher. This theory was presented by Mrs. Elizabeth Wells Gallup in 1899 in a book which she called The Biliteral Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon Discovered in His Works and Deciphered by Mrs. Elizabeth Wells Gallup.⁵⁸ Mrs. Gallup, a schoolteacher and high school principal in Michigan, was convinced that since Bacon had invented the cipher, he would use it in the plays to prove his authorship. She was greatly influenced by Dr. Owen, and her findings were much the same as his.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 68-69.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Wells Gallup, The Biliteral Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon Discovered in His Works and Deciphered by Mrs. Elizabeth Wells Gallup (Detroit: Howard Publishing Company, 1899). An enlarged second edition of this book appeared in 1900; it was followed by a third in 1901.

Mrs. Gallup was studying the facsimile of the First Folio used by Dr. Owen when her attention was caught by the different type forms (letter shapes such as roman, italic, and swash italic) used in the printing. She thought that this was Bacon's biliteral cipher in operation.⁵⁹ This mixing of type was not at all uncommon in Elizabethan printing, and Shakespearean scholars have observed that it meant no more in the First Folio than it did in any other manuscript of the times. The Baconians, however, declared that this was the perfect situation for Bacon; he could have inserted his cipher without arousing suspicion. It would have been easy for him to have marked the letters for the cipher after his scribe had finished copying the manuscript; only Bacon and the printer need have been in on the secret.

Having decided that Bacon had added the cipher to the plays, Mrs. Gallup used his key to produce a fairly intelligible text. What she found was very close to what Dr. Owen had found: Bacon was the son of Elizabeth I and Leicester (although she believed the Queen and Leicester were married before Elizabeth took the throne), and she also believed that Bacon had made the cipher so that later generations could have a true picture of Elizabethan history. Mrs.

⁵⁹See "Definitions of Terms Used" in Chapter I for a description of the biliteral cipher.

Gallup's list of those whose works Bacon "wrote" corresponded closely to Dr. Owen's list. In the "Explanatory Introduction" to the first edition of her book, she named Marlowe, Peele, Greene, Spenser, Jonson, and Burton (The Anatomy of Melancholy). She claimed that all of this other writing was done by Bacon in addition to his acknowledged writings and the Shakespeare Works.⁶⁰

The appearance of the message deciphered by Mrs. Gallup was described thus by the Friedmans:

In all these works the deciphered story is carried on in a kind of counterpoint; words or sentences are broken in one place, and caught up again in another, and the message is completed. The substance is repeated many times, in different books, as if Bacon had been making sure that at least one of the sources should be stumbled on.⁶¹

The publication of Mrs. Gallup's book raised a violent controversy. Some people were for her, many were against her, and a few tried to take a middle of the road attitude.⁶² The Baconian camp split in its opinion of her after the discovery that her cipher showed Bacon had used Pope's translation of Homer.⁶³ Since Pope's translations of The Iliad and The Odyssey were done in the years from 1715 to 1726, even the Baconians had to admit that something was wrong somewhere. Most of those in the United States who supported Mrs. Gallup were also supporters of Dr. Owen.

⁶⁰ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 194.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 195. ⁶² Ibid., p. 196.

⁶³ Robertson, loc. cit.

Many could not understand Mrs. Gallup's cipher and wrote to her asking for an explanation. She answered that it was difficult to understand at first; every sense had to be employed in working with the cipher. She directed attention to all of the time and money consumed in deciphering the Rosetta Stone and all the ancient hieroglyphics. The Friedmans objected to these ideas. They noted that once the key to a cipher is known, it should be easy to apply. The results obtained by any two people working together on a cipher should be identical in order for the cipher to be valid. No one has ever been able to obtain the same results as Mrs. Gallup. In her references to the Rosetta Stone and the hieroglyphics, she omitted one important factor: although many people have worked on these objects, each one has obtained the same translation as all of the others.

The discrepancy of the Pope translation and the evasiveness of Mrs. Gallup about her key forced her semi-excommunication from the Bacon Society for several years. During that time, she kept up her work. Convinced that there were manuscripts buried somewhere which would vindicate her cipher, she went to England to search for them, but she soon gave up because most of the graves of those she believed to be the masks of Bacon were inaccessible. She never lost her belief in the cipher theory, and before she

died in 1934, she was welcomed back into the Bacon Society.⁶⁴

Colonel and Mrs. Friedman had worked at one time as student assistants to Mrs. Gallup. They observed that if the students could not find a cipher message or a required word in the material with which they were working, Mrs. Gallup was always able to help them do so.

All of Mrs. Gallup's work depended on the varying sizes of the type forms in the manuscripts, but this was not a reliable basis for such an important project. Printing was notoriously bad in the period under discussion. Enlargement of original manuscripts often proved that significant letters were either ink-blots or that they had enlarged through the spreading of the ink. An expert type-designer, F. W. Goudy, examined the manuscripts of the various works in question used by Mrs. Gallup and concluded that nothing could be definitely determined by the type forms used in Elizabethan printing. Professor Charlton Hinman went through eighty copies of the First Folio in the Folger Library in Washington with a machine he designed for that purpose. He proved that all of the copies of the First Folio were different as far

⁶⁴ For an interesting account of the life and work of Elizabeth Wells Gallup, see the Friedmans' book, The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined. This book also contains an account of the work of Colonel Fabyan, the alleged expert cryptographer, who supported and exploited Mrs. Gallup and other Baconians.

as printing was concerned. These instances show that print size can not be a determining factor in locating a cipher.⁶⁵

In applying the dual test they used to determine the validity of any cryptographic system, the Friedmans found, in this case, that the method passed the test for linguistic validity although the message was very wordy. It was also noted by lexicographers that Mrs. Gallup used some words in senses they did not have when the cipher was put in the Works. For example, in Mrs. Gallup's decipherment, Bacon said he would like to introduce cryptography into the curricula of universities. In Bacon's time, "curricula" could only mean race courses. It was not until later that it came to mean "courses of study." Mrs. Gallup's messages also referred to some events which occurred after Bacon's death. However, these points only invalidated certain parts of the cipher and could have occurred because Mrs. Gallup made an error in reading. On the whole, the texts were linguistically valid.⁶⁶

In applying their test of the validity of the key as the second part of their dual examination, the Friedmans found that Mrs. Gallup's cipher failed. If the key is such that any part of it must be decided by the decipherer in a

⁶⁵ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 217-21.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 214.

subjective way, the key is invalid. Because of the possibilities of ink-blots, ink-spreads, and arbitrary use of letter forms, it was often necessary for Mrs. Gallup to decide which letter was meant to be a part of the cipher. This was a matter of personal judgment and not the use of scientific fact; her method could not be checked or duplicated. If her disciples obtained the same results as she, it was because they had her work or her results before them, or because they had preconceived ideas. The Friedmans concluded their examination by saying:

What can we say about the decipherments and the author? She was not a conscious fraud; we know that from personal experience. We are equally certain that she had not found, in all the books she examined, one application of the biliteral cipher . . . ⁶⁷

Seemingly influenced by Mrs. Gallup, Mrs. Constance M. Pott returned to the field of the controversy in 1903 with her book, The Biliteral Cipher: Hints for Deciphering.⁶⁸ Her work contributed nothing new.

In 1909, a new cipher theory emerged, which was part acrostic and part straight cipher. It was presented by William Stone Booth in his first book, Some Acrostic Signatures of Francis Bacon.⁶⁹ Booth looked for Bacon's signatures

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 214-15.

⁶⁸ Constance M. Pott, The Biliteral Cipher: Hints for Deciphering (London: R. Banks and Son, 1903).

⁶⁹ William Stone Booth, Some Acrostic Signatures of Francis Bacon (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909).

in the Works without using the anagrammatic approach. He found the signatures in hidden acrostics. He chose certain initial letters of words within the text (without regard for the position of the words in the line). If one wanted to write "Francis Bacon" into a page, he would make the first letter of the first line an F with N the corresponding letter at the bottom of the page. In between, he would place the letters necessary to complete the words. These letters should be placed so that they would be found in a zig-zag reading: if the first line is read from left to right, the next should be read from right to left. This is what is called a string cipher, and it is accomplished by tying knots on a string at specific distances to match a message laid in the text of a work. Booth's method corresponded to this. It was described by the Friedmans thus:

The method involves the use of a flat rectangular piece of wood, whose surface is divided into columns, each column standing for one letter of the alphabet according to some prearranged system. The sides of the piece of wood are notched, and the string is wound between the notches, beginning at the top, so that the knots in the string appear in the various columns of the ruled surface. The position of each knot thus indicates a letter and the message can be read off along the string.⁷⁰

The first part of Booth's book was devoted to specimens. In the second part, he listed about two hundred and fifty-one signatures derived by string cipher from the

⁷⁰Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 117.

Works, some of the doubtful plays, some anonymous plays, and Marlowe's plays.

Perhaps the greatest fault of Booth's string cipher was in the latitude he allowed himself. His method permitted him to use the initial letters of words anywhere in the line; he was not limited to the beginning or end of the line. He found two or three letters in one line, and then often skipped several lines before he found another word.

The Friedmans completely dismissed Booth's theory:

Booth's "string cipher" is so flexible that it might more justly be compared with a rubber band. There are "signatures" in plenty on any given page; the procedure very rarely yields a unique result; and it has no cryptological value whatsoever.⁷¹

The next cipher theory was presented in 1913 in a book called Studies in the Biliteral Cipher of Francis Bacon by Mrs. Gertrude Horsford Fiske, a devoted disciple of Mrs. Gallup.⁷² Mrs. Fiske applied Bacon's biliteral cipher to the Second Folio, which was published in 1632 (sixteen years after the death of Shakespeare and six years after the death of Bacon). She explained that Bacon had many followers who carried on his work; one of these followers put the ciphers in the works of the Second Folio. Mrs. Fiske used all of the forms of the biliteral type

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 123.

⁷² Gertrude Horsford Fiske, Studies in the Biliteral Cipher of Francis Bacon (Boston: John W. Luce and Company, 1913).

amassed by Mrs. Gallup, but unlike Mrs. Gallup, she did not produce a clear message. The Friedmans dismissed her work with a very few words: "Their (the studies by Mrs. Fiske) only drawback is that they are incomprehensible . . ." ⁷³

James Phinney Baxter, whose book, The Greatest of Literary Problems (1915), was discussed in Section II of this chapter, entered the field of the cipher theories by an indirect route. In Chapter XVI of his book, he discussed the ciphers in general and the work of Mrs. Gallup in particular. He had been a critic of her theory, but after he began a correspondence with her, she sent him her cipher messages. His examination of them convinced him that she was right, and he supported her claims in his book. Baxter actually proved nothing except the validity of the biliteral cipher and the possibility of its having been inserted in the Works. He did not do anything toward proving that there is a cipher in the Works or that Mrs. Gallup had actually found it. ⁷⁴

If Baxter's biased summary and the introduction of new contenders marked the decline of the simple theories, they did not do the same for the cipher theories. Cryptological arguments continued to appear with regularity for many more years.

⁷³Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 81.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 224-25.

During the decade from 1920 to 1930 there appeared several books by Walter Conrad Arensberg, who was described by the Friedmans as a poet, scholar, student of occultism, and a patron of the arts.⁷⁵ But Arensberg was first and foremost an amateur cryptologist. His first cryptographic interest was in the works of Dante, but in the 1920's, he turned his attention to Shakespeare.⁷⁶ He worked on many different types of ciphers, and, because he cannot be classified as a specialist in anagrams, numerology, or one of the other types of cryptography, he will be discussed in this section on general ciphers.

In 1922, Arensberg privately published Part One of his book, The Cryptography of Shakespeare.⁷⁷ He dismissed the ciphers of Donnelly, Owen, and Booth as unproven. He then tried to prove that cryptographic evidence that Bacon used the pseudonym William Shakespeare is to be found in the original editions of the Works. He believed these original editions contain the evidence of Bacon's authorship in hidden acrostics, which can be deciphered to yield Bacon's name in various forms. Arensberg allowed himself a great deal of flexibility, and it was this which was the cause of his

⁷⁵The Arensberg Collection in the Philadelphia Museum of Art is one of the best collections of modern art in the United States.

⁷⁶Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 137.

⁷⁷Walter C. Arensberg, The Cryptography of Shakespeare (San Francisco: privately published, 1922).

failure. Even his explanations of his system were vague and hazy as if he wanted to allow himself latitude. The Friedman's commented thus on his vagueness and flexibility:

Put in plain English, his recipe amounts to this: Take any initial letters you like as long as you take them from consecutive words at the beginning or end of any line, or from consecutive lines, or both. Rearrange the letters to form any word or phrase you care to choose, and serve with a flourish.⁷⁸

They were also of the opinion that persons using Arensberg's system could find Bacon's signature on any page of a current newspaper or magazine. The occurrence of the letters B, A, C, O, and N as initial letters is so frequent that finding Bacon's name is simple.

Arensberg went to the Friedmans with his system and told them he had found the sentence "The author was Francis Bacon" seven times in The Tempest. The Friedmans took The Cryptography of Shakespeare, and, using Arensberg's system, they found seven times in Arensberg's own book, "The author is William F. Friedman." Arensberg admitted this proof and then said:

But you know and I know that I wrote The Cryptography of Shakespeare and not you so I am not particularly disturbed by that. All the same, what you have done does not disprove the presence of the sentence "The author was Francis Bacon" which I found in The Tempest.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 143.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 150-51.

It is impossible to reason with a person who uses that kind of logic. Arensberg abandoned his anagrammatic acrostic system before Part Two of The Cryptography of Shakespeare was finished, but he continued to look for a cipher of some kind in the Works.

In 1923, he published The Secret Grave of Francis Bacon and His Mother at Lichfield Chapter House.⁸⁰ In this book, he used a new method which he called "the Baconian key cipher." With this cipher, he "found" that Bacon did not die in 1626, but in 1631. He was buried with his mother, according to Arensberg, in the Lichfield Cathedral Chapter House.

Arensberg did not have the decade entirely to himself. While he was casting about for new cipher systems, William Stone Booth reappeared on the scene in 1925 with his Subtle Shining Secrecies, Writ in the Margents of Bookes.⁸¹ This was to be his final definitive work to replace all of the other books he had written. He abandoned his string cipher for new devices by which he found Bacon's signature everywhere. This book was no better than his others had been. There was one significant passage, however, in which Booth expressed his own feelings and the feelings of all the

⁸⁰Walter C. Arensberg, The Secret Grave of Francis Bacon and His Mother at Lichfield Chapter House (San Francisco: privately published, 1923).

⁸¹William Stone Booth, Subtle Shining Secrecies, Writ in the Margents of Bookes (Boston: Walter H. Baker Company, 1925).

Baconians about the reason for the unpopularity of their beliefs. He said that there were "large vested interests in the shape of academic positions, text-books, and publications which must be protected for the sake of income or royalties."⁸² In other words, scholars and publishers ignored (and are still ignoring) the Baconian claims because they feared the loss of royalties.

Edmund Pearson reviewed Booth's book in an article called "Eggs and Shakespeare" in the June 24, 1925 issue of Outlook, and he denounced it completely. He indicated that Booth and other Baconians based their contentions on the fact that the Works could not have been acknowledged by Bacon because he feared disgrace. However, Bacon could have taken time to put all kinds of acrostics, puzzles, and tricks in the Works to indicate his authorship without fear of their being discovered in his own lifetime.⁸³

Arensberg re-entered the controversy in 1928 with The Shakesperian (sic) Mystery.⁸⁴ He used mystic symbols to support his findings about the secret grave of Bacon and his mother at Lichfield Chapter House. He revealed that the secret grave symbolized rebirth and was meant to be a shrine

⁸² Edmund Lester Pearson, "Eggs and Shakespeare," Outlook, 140 (June 24, 1925), 301, citing William Stone Booth, Subtle Shining Secrecies, Writ in the Margents of Bookes (Boston: Walter H. Baker Company, 1925).

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Walter C. Arensberg, The Shakesperian Mystery (Pittsburgh: privately published, 1928).

for the Rosicrucian Society. He believed the Rosicrucian Society knew the secret of the authorship of the plays and could solve the controversy. The Shakesperian Mystery was rambling and incomprehensible, and it proved nothing.⁸⁵

Later that same year, Arensberg explained his key cipher more fully in The Baconian Keys.⁸⁶ This book, he said, would correct the errors he had made in The Secret Grave . . . The Baconian Keys relied on the significance of numbers as they were used by Bacon and the Rosicrucians. In the first sentence of the book, Arensberg said, "The numerical key-cipher employed by Bacon and by members of the Rosicrucian Fraternity is a method of representing a text by a number which is represented by another text."⁸⁷ The Friedmans commented, "This is about the most comprehensible sentence in the book; the rest is embarrassingly obscure and deadly dull."⁸⁸

Arensberg's last two books, Francis Bacon, William Butts and the Pagets of Beaudesert (1929)⁸⁹ and The Magic

⁸⁵ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 151.

⁸⁶ Walter C. Arensberg, The Baconian Keys (Pittsburgh: privately published, 1928).

⁸⁷ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 152, citing Walter C. Arensberg, The Baconian Keys (Pittsburgh: privately published, 1928).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Walter C. Arensberg, Francis Bacon, William Butts and the Pagets of Beaudesert (Pittsburgh: privately published, 1929).

Ring of Francis Bacon (1930)⁹⁰ were no better than his other books had been; they were, if anything, more confusing. In these two books, he added many more devices for deciphering Bacon's message. The "magic ring" was what he called his method of finding messages in the First Folio and The Advancement of Learning. This method required devices which were described by the Friedmans as "a magic chess board, a cryptographic watch, calendrical symbolism, the cyclical index, three alphabets (one of twenty-four letters, one of twenty-one, and one of twenty), the heptadic pattern, ephemeral letters, argumentation, tetradic forms of dates, various mathematical operations, and transformations and substitutions."⁹¹ This list of devices was fantastic, but so were Arensberg's findings: Bacon was a descendant of Edward, Prince of Wales, the son of Henry VI, and was therefore a pretender to the throne; Bacon was the illegitimate son of William Butts, the oldest son of the physician of Henry VIII, and Lady Anne Cooke Bacon; Bacon had a son who was adopted by the Pagets of Beaudesert; Bacon founded the Rosicrucian Society and left it to be carried on by the Paget family, who were to reveal the true authorship of the Works when safety permitted; Bacon hid

⁹⁰ Walter C. Arensberg, The Magic Ring of Francis Bacon (Pittsburgh: privately published, 1930).

⁹¹ Friedman and Friedman, loc. cit.

at Beaudesert from 1626, when history records his death, to 1631, when he actually died.⁹²

It is highly probable that Arensberg was disillusioned by his own work; he moved from theory to theory, often without finishing what he had started. However, he remained convinced until the day he died that there is a cipher in the Works. In their wills, he and his wife endowed the Francis Bacon Foundation, which was begun in Pasadena, California in 1954. The library of the Foundation contains works of both the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, text-books on cryptography, and Rosicrucian literature. The research carried on there follows the methods set by Arensberg.

Arensberg's theories largely refuted themselves; it is not necessary to detail here the fallacies of his methods. It is sufficient to note that his work was cryptologically invalid and often so incomprehensible that testing it was impossible.

A new cryptographic approach to the controversy was made by Joseph Martin Feely, a lawyer whose hobby was deciphering Shakespeare: Feely wanted to prove that Shakespeare, not Bacon, was the author of the Works. His system was called "Shakespeare's Maze" and was described in five books printed privately in Rochester, New York between 1931 and 1942: The

⁹² Ibid., p. 153.

Shakespearean Cypher in the First Folio (1931); Decyphering Shakespeare: Work Sheets in the Shakespearean Cypher (1934); Shakespeare's Maze Further Deciphered (1938); The Cypher in the Sonnets: The Dedication Key (1940); and Cypher Idyll Anent the Little Westerne Flower, Decyphered from a Midsommer Nights Dreame (1942). According to Feely's findings, the author of the Works had been a member of the Italian nobility and had lived an exciting and adventurous life (which was actually a combination of the lives of all of the contenders). Feely was the only person ever to use the cipher method in an effort to prove Shakespeare's authorship. Although the name "William Shakespeare" does not sound very Italian, Feely believed in his research and was able to find the words "Will" and "Shake" with his system. His work was no better than that of the Baconians; the Friedmans could not test his cipher because they could not understand it. That is refutation enough.⁹³

The next cipher system appeared in 1947 in a booklet entitled Francis Bacon's Cipher Signatures. It was written by Edward Johnson and published by the Bacon Society. Johnson believed that Bacon had put his message in the Works by placing letters in a certain way on the pages of the manuscripts. A mathematical arrangement such as this eliminated

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 81-83.

the elements of chance and coincidence; the letters of the message could not be confused unless the text was revised, nor could coincidence account for the letters of the message appearing in perfect sequence. Johnson put the text of the Works on squared paper and picked out his message. He was allowed by his system to use letters more than once, and these letters did not have to be in correct order.

Using Johnson's method and his diagram of the poem "To the Reader" in the First Folio, the Friedman's found the following message: "No kidding! I, Francis Bacon, wrote these Shakespeare plaies."⁹⁴ No further refutation seems necessary.

Ciphers in the epitaph. Shakespeare's epitaph, which can be found chiseled in stone over his grave at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford, has received its share of attention from the Baconians. The original stone slab crumbled away and was replaced in the early nineteenth century. The inscription was kept as far as its wording was concerned, but the letters were made more uniform. It is not this present form of the epitaph which interested the Baconians, however. The early form had a strange mixture of large and small letters. Edmund Malone (who relied heavily on George Steevens) got the original lettering and printed it in his edition of the plays in the late

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 83-85.

eighteenth century. Since its discovery by the Baconians in Malone's edition, the Baconians have searched for a cipher in it.

The older epitaph looked something like this:

Good Frennd for Iesus SAKE forbear
 To diGG T-E Dust Enclo-Ased He-Re
 Blese be T-E Man, Y spares T-Es Stones
 And curst be He Y moves my Bones.⁹⁵

The epitaph cipher theories have never gained as much attention as other cryptological arguments, but they are an interesting part of the controversy as a whole.

The first person to "find" a cipher in the epitaph was an American named Hugh Black. In the October, 1887 issue of North American Review, Black published an article in which he said that the biliteral cipher was used in the epitaph.⁹⁶ The result of his decipherment was "Francis Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays." In order to make his cipher readable, Black had to take the jumble of letters he obtained and arrange them to suit himself and his purposes. The actual message he obtained was FRA BA WRT EAR A Y and the word SHAXPEARE. It takes a great deal of imagination to see those letters as the solution to the authorship controversy.

⁹⁵There has been some controversy over whether or not this is the form of the epitaph as it really was, but that is a subject for a study of its own.

⁹⁶Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

Probably inspired by Black, Herbert Janvrin Browne, an American, published a pamphlet in 1887 called Is It Shakespeare's Confession? The Cryptogram in His Epitaph.⁹⁷ He stated that Black's message was correct, that the epitaph was a remarkable cryptogram, and that the patience and ingenuity of Bacon were remarkable in putting the cipher in the epitaph. Browne then went on to demonstrate some cipher ideas of his own. The Baconians seized on this seemingly earnest and scholarly work, but Browne finally admitted that it was a satire and parody on the methods of the Baconians. According to the Friedmans, his mock cryptogram was scientifically better than some of those which had been seriously advanced by the Baconians.⁹⁸

An old friend returned to the controversy in 1899. Ignatius Donnelly turned his attention to the epitaph in The Cipher in the Plays and on the Tombstone.⁹⁹ Donnelly was pleased that Black was the first person in two hundred and seventy-one years to see the relationship between Bacon's cipher and the epitaph, but he was not pleased with Black's

⁹⁷ Browne's pamphlet was published in 1887 in Washington, D. C.

⁹⁸ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 58.

⁹⁹ Ignatius Donnelly, The Cipher in the Plays and on the Tombstone (Minneapolis: The Verulam Publishing Company, 1899).

methods or his results. Donnelly went to work on the epitaph and by devious routes (as unscientific as Black's) he arrived at the message "Francis Bacon wrote the Greene, Marlowe and Shakespeare plays."¹⁰⁰

The Friedmans found that there was no genuine key to Donnelly's cipher, and that he cheated with the key he did use. He had a message to find, and he found it by undermining the key. He could, by these methods, have found anything he wanted to find in the epitaph.¹⁰¹

Other epitaph cipher theories have appeared from time to time, but they have been as invalid as the examples presented above. None of these have presented anything to advance the solution to the controversy.

Anagrams. The anagram, which involves the transposition of letters to form words or sentences, has long been a popular type of cipher, and it was widely used in Elizabethan times. It is not surprising, therefore, that some Baconians have "found" anagrams placed in the Works by Francis Bacon. Cryptographically, anagrams are much too flexible to be valid. There is no specific key, and there are too many ways of rearranging any set of letters; there

¹⁰⁰ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 56.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 57.

is usually no way to be sure the author intended any one of the messages or any message at all. Such flexibility makes it easy for the decipherer to find the message he desires; it therefore leads many Baconians to search for the message they want.¹⁰²

There is one word which has received more attention than any other in the search for anagrams. This word, "honorificabilitudinitatibus," was used by the Clown in Act V, Scene of Love's Labour's Lost. It has come to be called simply "the long word." The attention of the Baconians was drawn to it by the Northumberland Manuscript, an incomplete Elizabethan manuscript found at Alnwick Castle, the home of the Earls of Northumberland. It contained some essays and speeches by Bacon, a letter by Sir Philip Sidney, and a copy of Leicester's Commonwealth. It is the title page of the manuscript, however, which has been responsible for the Baconian interest. This title page is covered with scribblings written at all angles and in a handwriting which is different from that of the fragmentary table of contents. These scribblings include the following words: Mr. ffrancis Bacon, William Shakespeare several times in full and contracted forms, Rychard the second, Rychard the third, honorificabilitudine (which is either a contraction or a misquote

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 137.

of the Clown's word in Love's Labour's Lost), a misquotation from Lucrece, and Ile of Dogs by Thomas Nashe. The manuscript has been dated between 1597 and 1603, since the Isle of Dogs affair occurred in 1597 and Bacon was knighted in 1603.¹⁰³

It was the Baconians' contention that the manuscript once contained all the works named in the title page scribbings, and the long word was the link that tied Shakespeare to these works. The long word was found in the collected papers of Bacon in the British Museum, and this was all the Baconians needed. The Shakespeareans argued that it was merely the work of a scribe tying out a new quill. The names of Bacon and Shakespeare were probably well known, and it would not be strange to find their names idly scribbled; it could well have revealed the extent of their popularity at that time. It takes a great amount of imagination to accept as proof of authorship the names of two authors and a word they both used.¹⁰⁴

The Friedmans did not accept the long word anagrams as proof of Bacon's authorship. They found evidence that the long word was a popular nonsense word in Elizabethan England; they also discovered that neither Bacon nor

¹⁰³F. E. Holliday, A Shakespeare Companion (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1952), pp. 441-42.

¹⁰⁴Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 102-04.

Shakespeare was the first person to use it. It was first printed in a book by da Genova in 1460, and it was not invented for the purpose of concealing a cipher.¹⁰⁵ Frayne Williams, in Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe, pointed out that the long word had been coined by medieval Latinists, and that by Shakespeare's time, it was a popular tongue twister.¹⁰⁶

Many different messages have been anagrammatized from the long word; if it had been placed in Love's Labour's Lost to divulge the secret of the authorship, there should have been only one clear message found by all of the anagrammatists. Each different message cancelled all of the others; each decipherer could get the message he wanted by anagrammatizing the word according to his own system. The Friedmans drew the following conclusion about any anagram of the long word: ". . . the process is without any fixed rules, without any unique solution, and without any cryptological validity."¹⁰⁷

There are many words in the Works other than the long one which have attracted those interested in anagrams, but the messages obtained from these words are just as invalid as the messages from the long word. Other favorite subjects for the anagrammatists have been the poem "To the Reader" at the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 107-08.

¹⁰⁶ Williams, loc. cit.

¹⁰⁷ Friedman and Friedman, loc. cit.

beginning of the First Folio and Bacon's will, but neither of these has provided any valid messages.

A few examples of anagram cipher theories follow. Dr. Wilhelm Preyer of Wiesbaden anagrammatized the poem "To the Reader" in 1895. His method was simple: he picked out all of the words beginning with capital letters and rearranged them to form a barely intelligible message which "proved" Bacon's authorship.¹⁰⁸

The first Baconian to use the long word was an American, Dr. Isaac Hull Platt. In 1897, Platt "showed" how Bacon had concealed his authorship in long word anagrams and acrostics. However, the message he obtained did not make good sense, nor was he consistent in his method.¹⁰⁹

In 1902, the German writer and devout Baconian Edwin Barmann wrote Der Shakespeare-Dichter: Wer Wars? to add to his long list of Baconian writings.¹¹⁰ He produced several very odd Latin phrases and other material which he obtained by putting the long word in a circle and reading it both clockwise and counter-clockwise. The messages he obtained made little sense and were cryptologically invalid.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 109. ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 104-05.

¹¹⁰ Edwin Barmann, Der Shakespeare-Dichter: Wer Wars? (Leipzig: privately published, 1902). Between 1894 and 1906, Barmann published many books on the controversy, but none of them contributed anything of importance.

¹¹¹ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 105-06.

Sir Edward Durning-Lawrence was also an ardent anagrammatist. A large part of his book, Bacon Is Shakespeare (which has already been discussed in this chapter), was devoted to the long word. From it, he anagrammed the words "Hi ludi F. Baconis nati tuiti orbi" which meant "These plays, F. Bacon's offspring, are preserved for the world."¹¹² Durning-Lawrence admitted that many words and phrases could be obtained from such a long word, but he defied his readers to find any other complete sentence than the one he had found. Not content to stop there, he offered numerical proof of the validity of his anagram by taking numbers from an undisclosed source. It hardly needs to be said that his findings were not valid cryptologically.¹¹³

In 1912, John Moody Emerson published Two Anagrams, in which he explored Bacon's will.¹¹⁴ Emerson "found" a message which disclosed that Bacon, Shakespeare, and Montaigne were one and the same poet.

The use of anagrams to discover the author of any given work is always questionable. The Friedmans knew of no valid or authenticated case in which an author's work had been established as his by the use of anagrams found in a

¹¹² Halliday, op. cit., p. 49.

¹¹³ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 106-07.

¹¹⁴ Discussed in Ibid., pp. 108-09. No bibliographical details available.

book or play. They concluded their discussion of anagrams by saying that in the use of anagrams, "There is always room for doubt unless the man who composed the anagram recreates his own message from it; for only he knows for certain what message he intended to conceal."¹¹⁵

Numerology. The use of numerology to "prove" the authorship of Francis Bacon began early in the twentieth century. The method used was very elementary. Numbers were assigned to the twenty-four letter Elizabethan alphabet as follows:

Simple

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I-J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U-V | W | X | Y | Z |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |

Reverse

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I-J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U-V | W | X | Y | Z |
| 24 | 23 | 22 | 21 | 20 | 19 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

The numerical value of the name of an author or one of his works was then determined. The numerical value of Bacon's name in simple numerology was found as follows:

$$\begin{array}{r} B \ A \ C \ O \ N \\ 2 \ 1 \ 3 \ 14 \ 13 \end{array} = 33$$

In reverse numerology, the numerical value of Shakespeare's name was found as follows:

¹¹⁵Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 113.

116

S H A K E S P E A R E = 172
7 17 24 15 20 7 10 20 24 8 20

The numerical values of the names of authors, works, and key words were explored by the Baconians.

Since anyone with sufficient time, patience, and ingenuity can find his own name in any given manuscript by the use of numerology, the validity of such findings as a determinant of authorship is always questionable. The Baconians have violated almost all of the rules of cryptology in their work with numerology. For this reason, there were no valid findings, and the work of the numerologists will be discussed only briefly.

Frank Woodward, who was at one time the president of the Bacon Society of Great Britain, and his brother, Parker Woodward, were the authors of dozens of books and pamphlets on the controversy between 1916 and 1923. Much of this material was devoted to numerology. Their methods were never clearly explained, and they took such liberties in their interpretation of the Bacon "key" cipher mentioned in The Advancement of Learning that their work was invalid.¹¹⁷

In 1930, Bertram Theobald, who had been president of the Bacon Society before Frank Woodward, produced Francis

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 169-70.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 170-71.

Bacon Concealed and Revealed after eighteen years of research.¹¹⁸

Theobald followed his first book with numerous articles in Baconiana and several books, among which were Exit Shakespeare,¹¹⁹ Enter Francis Bacon,¹²⁰ and Shakespeare's Sonnets Unmasked.¹²¹ Among other things, Theobald "discovered" that Bacon had written Pierre Ambroise's Histoire Naturelle, and that he had actually been the one to do the 1640 Gilbert Wat(t)s translation of his own De Augmentis Scientiarum in addition to the Shakespeare Works. Theobald also revealed other masks behind which Bacon had hidden: Puttenham, Greene, Peele, Spenser, and Marlowe.¹²² Numerical evaluation of the family mottoes of Bacon and Shakespeare only added to the "proof" of the Baconian authorship.¹²³ Theobald's method was patterned after the work of the Woodwards, and his findings were just as invalid as theirs.

¹¹⁸ Bertram G. Theobald, Francis Bacon Concealed and Revealed (London: Cecil Palmer, 1930).

¹¹⁹ Bertram G. Theobald, Exit Shakespeare (London: Cecil Palmer, 1931).

¹²⁰ Bertram G. Theobald, Enter Francis Bacon (London: Cecil Palmer, 1932).

¹²¹ Bertram G. Theobald, Shakespeare's Sonnets Unmasked (London: Search Publishing Company, 1933).

¹²² Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 176-77.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 178.

Other "astounding" but cryptologically invalid numerical discoveries were made by George M. Battey, Jr., who showed the simple numerical relationships between "William Shakespeare" (177), "Francis Bacon" (100), "Daniel Defoe" (77), and "Robinson Crusoe" (177), thus reversing the Baconian stand and "proving" that Defoe wrote the works of Bacon as well as those of Shakespeare: H. A. W. Speckman, who "proved" Spenser's works were written by Bacon; and W. G. Royal-Dawson, who also "proved" Bacon's authorship of Spenser's works.¹²⁴

The difficulties in the use of numerology to prove something as important as disputed authorship can best be summed up in the words of the mathematician, Eric T. Bell: "Although numbers cannot lie, they have a positive genius for telling the truth with intention to deceive."¹²⁵

Conclusion. There will undoubtedly be other amateur cryptologists who will come forth with "proof" that Bacon wrote the Shakespeare Works. Since Bacon left no key, ciphers can be made to prove anything the decipherer wants to prove. Shakespeareans, in order to prove the fallacy of the Baconian systems, have used the very same systems to prove Gertrude Stein, Theodore Roosevelt, and even William

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 181.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 187, citing Eric T. Bell, Numerology (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1933).

Shakespeare himself wrote the works in question. The years and years of work spent by everyone from Mrs. Windle to Edward D. Johnson might not have been wasted effort if these misguided people had sought expert opinion. In the final paragraph of their book, the Friedmans suggested a prevention for all of this waste effort:

We suggest that those who wish to dispute the authorship of the Shakespeare plays should not in the future resort to cryptographic evidence unless they show themselves in some way competent to do so. They must do better than their predecessors. We urge that they should acquaint themselves at least with the basic principles of the subject, and that they conduct their arguments with some standards of rigour. Before they add to the very large corpus of writing on the subject, they might also consider subjecting their findings to the inspection of a professional who has no strong leaning to either side of the dispute. If all this is done the argument will be raised to a higher plane. There is even the possibility that it would cease altogether.¹²⁶

IV. BACONIAN SOCIETIES AND PUBLICATIONS

The Baconian movement grew and flourished in the late nineteenth century. Although serious scholars tended to ignore its presence, it gathered into its camp members of the legal, scientific, and teaching professions as well as people of many and diverse occupations. It is not surprising, therefore, that these people organized a society to further their work.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 287-88.

The Bacon Society was founded in London, England, in 1815. The following year it began to publish the Journal of the Bacon Society; the name of this magazine was changed to Baconiana in 1891, and it is still published. In 1892, a group in Chicago began to publish a quarterly magazine which it also called Baconiana, but it did not continue very long.

The chief center of the controversy has shifted to America, although it has not received the support of Shakespearean scholars in the United States.¹²⁷ It was not until 1922, however, that the Bacon Society of America was founded. From 1923 to 1931, this group published American Baconiana; after the failure of this magazine, Baconiana became the only journal of the American and English Bacon Societies.

In the early part of the 1930's, the Baconian movement became very popular in Germany, and a periodical called Deutsche Baconiana: Leitschrift für Bacon-Shakespeare Forschung (German Baconiana: Journal for Bacon-Shakespeare Investigation) was published from 1930 to 1932 in Frankfurt.

Bacon societies continue to be active in the United States and Great Britain, and they are still engaged in research through which their members hope to prove that Bacon was Shakespeare.

¹²⁷Westfall, op. cit., p. 292.

In a magazine article entitled "Baconian Heresy: A Post Mortem," which appeared in the November, 1946 issue of Nineteenth Century and After, R. C. Churchill stated the two-fold objectives of the Bacon Society:

1. To encourage the study of the works of Francis Bacon as philosopher, lawyer, statesman, and poet; his character, genius, and life; his influence on his own and succeeding times, and the tendencies and results of his writing.
2. To encourage the general study of the evidence in favour of his authorship of the plays commonly ascribed to Shakespeare, and to investigate his connection with other works of the period.¹²⁸

It was Churchill's belief that these two objectives cancelled each other. Examination shows that he had a valid reason for believing this. A thorough study of Bacon's life would reveal, among other things, that he did not have time to complete his greatest projects, much less write most of the literary work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; that his literary style was completely different from Shakespeare's; and that he died in 1626 and did not write from beyond the grave. If the first objective of the Bacon Society were carried out thoroughly and completely, the second objective would be superfluous.

V. GENERAL REFUTATION AND CONCLUSION

General refutation. The great majority of the Baconian theories presented in this chapter have been

¹²⁸ Churchill, op. cit., p. 265.

specifically refuted. It is therefore logical that some of the more general refutations of the Baconian movement should be presented.¹²⁹

The first consideration in a general refutation should be the problem of secrecy. How was the secret of the authorship kept in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods? If the Baconian theories are to be accepted, the authorship question should be called the great conspiracy rather than the great controversy.

Some Baconians felt that only Bacon and the printer shared the secret. Others were sure that only Bacon and the men he chose as masks were in on the conspiracy. Still others were more interested in the fact that Bacon was the author; how he kept his secret was not important to them, and they left research into this problem to others. A few Baconians ignored the question completely.

Even if Bacon had been responsible for the greatest part of the literature of Elizabethan and Jacobean England and the men behind whom he masked shared this secret, there were still the actors, directors, managers, and others connected with the theaters. The playwrights were often required to make immediate deletions or changes in the plays; there

¹²⁹Most of the following general refutations would apply also to theories other than those presented by the Baconians.

was no chance for the masks to consult Bacon about these changes. Of course, the Baconians answered this with the argument that these masks were capable of making minor changes. However, the people of the theater were shrewd. It would not have taken them long to discover that the man whose name was on the manuscript was not the author.

This same argument holds true if Shakespeare were the only Bacon mask. Shakespeare must have known Fletcher, Beaumont, Dekker, Jonson, and some of the other literary giants of the period. Thomas Fuller, a clergyman and historian, recorded that there were many "wit-combates betwixt him (Shakespeare) and Ben Johnson."¹³⁰ The taverns, especially the Mermaid, were popular meeting places for literary men. Shakespeare could not have avoided such meetings, and it would not have taken his contemporaries, especially Ben Jonson, the literary dictator of the period, very long to discover that they had an imposter in their midst. Jonson would have delighted in writing an expose. If he were in on the secret, as some Baconians claim, nothing would have given him greater pleasure than alluding to it somewhere in his works.

M. M. Reese in Shakespeare: His World and His Work summed up the situation very well. He said that Shakespeare

¹³⁰Holliday, op. cit., p. 222.

might have accepted a bribe to mask for Bacon. Reese went on:

But many others would have had to be similarly persuaded. The secret could not have been kept from the actors, from Jonson, from all Shakespeare's rival dramatists. If the theatrical profession could guard such a secret so closely that not a breath of it was heard for 250 years, then nothing, not even the authorship of a syndicate consisting of Guy Fawkes and Archbishop Abbot, is impossible.¹³¹

The parallelisms between the writings of Francis Bacon and William Shakespeare have been an important factor with the Baconians and other anti-Shakespeareans, and yet they are among the most easily refuted aspects of the controversy. After becoming acquainted with the writings of Bacon, the Baconians turned to the Shakespeare Works; they found many similarities in the words, phrases, and thoughts of the two men. Some of these similarities are listed here as examples of what the Baconians consider to be an important part of their argument. The first shows a fairly close resemblance:

It is the wisdom of rats that will be sure
to leave a house before it fall.

Bacon, Essay on Wisdom

Instinctively the very rats have quit it.

Shakespeare, The Tempest, I, ii, 147

¹³¹M. M. Reese, Shakespeare: His World and His Work (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1953), p. 375, Reese is speaking of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, in which the fanatic Catholic, Guy Fawkes, was apprehended during his attempt to blow up Parliament; Archbishop Abbot was the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, who was a favorite of King James I and who later had Puritan leanings.

The following shows only slight resemblance:

It is against Nature for money to beget money.
Bacon, Essay on Usury

Antonio: As is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
Shylock: I cannot tell, I make it breed as fast:
Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice,
I, 111, 97

The next example demonstrates a word for word similarity:

Thought is free.
Bacon, Promus, Folio 96B

Thought is free.
Shakespeare, The Tempest, III, 11, 133

One further example of the Baconian idea of similarity is the following:

The Stairs to honors are steep, the standing
slippery, the regress a downfall.
Bacon, Advancement of Learning

The art o' the court,
As hard to leave as keep; whose top to climb
Is certain falling, or so slippery that
The fear's as had as falling;
Shakespeare, Cymbeline, III, 111, 46

After a study of hundreds of similarities, the Baconians concluded that Shakespeare was not the author of the Works. At this point, a rather facetious but none the less valid question comes to mind: If these similarities of thought indicate a single authorship, is it not possible that Shakespeare was the author of Bacon's works as well as his own? This reasoning is just as faulty as the Baconian reasoning. Research has shown that these words, phrases, and thoughts were common to many of the writers of the Elizabethan and

Jacobean periods. If it is assumed that these words, phrases, and thoughts were peculiar to Bacon, then it becomes necessary to assume that Bacon wrote almost everything written in that period. Many of the Baconians have arrived at just such a conclusion, and they have brought disaster to their theories when their claims went beyond all reason in absurdity and ridiculousness.

It is easier to see the differences between Bacon and Shakespeare. Bacon was not a poet except in the way that all Elizabethan prose writers were who wrote in a poetic way, and Bacon's prose was less inspired than that of most of the prose writers of his time. He made no pretense of being a poet; the only poems of his which are extant are far removed from the moving sonnets of Shakespeare. Bacon was essentially a scientific philosopher; scientifically, he classified emotions and affections to the point where it is difficult to visualize him as the author of Romeo and Juliet, for example. Shakespeare's plays and poems were full of emotions and warmth; they were not scientific and cold.

It has been mentioned that Bacon was a philosopher; his was a specific philosophy of a new world and a new science. Shakespeare was a playwright and dramatic poet whose work could be fitted into all philosophies.

John Fiske, in an essay entitled "Forty Years of Bacon-Shakespeare Folly," noted a difference between Bacon

and Shakespeare in humor. Bacon's humor was almost insipid, while Shakespeare's was light and gay.¹³² The list of differences between Shakespeare and Bacon could be extended into a dissertation. It is safe to say there are more differences than there are similarities between the two writers.

An interesting refutation of the Baconian theories was provided by the Mendenhall Technique.¹³³ A letter to the editor in The Saturday Review of Literature mentioned that the Mendenhall Technique had been used on the writings of Bacon and Shakespeare, and proved that these works were not written by the same author.¹³⁴ Further investigation of Dr. Mendenhall's research by the author of this study revealed that early in this century, a wealthy Baconian had approached Dr. Mendenhall. He wanted proof that Bacon was the author of the Works. Dr. Mendenhall went to work on the project. Works of Jonson, Goldsmith, Beaumont, Fletcher, Marlowe, Lord Lytton, Addison, and a group of authors contemporary with Dr. Mendenhall were taken for controls. After extensive research, Dr. Mendenhall found no similarity between the works of Bacon and Shakespeare. Shakespeare's vocabulary consisted of words averaging four letters in length; words used with the greatest

¹³²Fiske, op. cit., p. 390.

¹³³For a description of this technique, see "Definition of Terms," Chapter I, page 8.

¹³⁴Edward Thomas, "Letters to the Editor," The Saturday Review of Literature, 32 (February 19, 1949), 22.

frequency were also four-letter words. Bacon's vocabulary consisted of much longer words. All of the writers tested by Dr. Mendenhall differed, although Marlowe was the most like Shakespeare in vocabulary and length of words.¹³⁵

There are many other arguments which could be presented in a general refutation. There are also many questions: How did Bacon find time to do everything history says he did as well as everything the Baconians say he did? Why have no literary scholars ever become advocates of the Baconian theories? Which would have been easier: Bacon's acquisition of a knowledge of the common people and the country peasants and their ways, or Shakespeare's acquisition of a knowledge of the tone and manners of courtly society? If he were the author, why did Bacon, who was alive in 1623, permit the First Folio to appear with such a poor representation and with such slovenly reproductions of his work when he could have gone (secretly) to his printer and improved the Folio? Was Bacon as truly great in all fields of endeavor as the Baconians picture him, or have they over-rated him? If the answers to these questions were forthcoming, perhaps the controversy would be resolved.

¹³⁵ Calvin Hoffman, The Murder of the Man Who Was "Shakespeare" (New York: Julian Messner, 1955), pp. 138-39. Hoffman used this as one of the proofs of Marlowe's authorship (see Chapter V, page 153).

The last point of general refutation needs hardly to be mentioned. It concerns the absurdity of many of the claims made by the Baconians. Edmund Pearson in "Eggs and Shakespeare," a review of Booth's Subtle Shining Secrecies, compared the Baconian description of Bacon and his masks to the comedy intrigue in a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. He went on to say:

Nobody would have been more amused by it than Mr. William Shakespeare, of Stratford and London, author of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark and other plays and poems. And nobody would be more irritated by it than Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, author of Novum Organum.¹³⁶

Certainly, there is much to be said against theories which knew no bounds of time and space in their scope and no consideration of the physical and mental capacities of the man they named as the author of some of the greatest works in English literary history. Disgusted by the claims of the Baconians, John Fiske wrote an excellent summation of the situation:

If things go on at this rate, we shall presently have a religious sect hold as its first article of faith that Francis Bacon created the heavens and earth in six days, and rested on the seventh day.¹³⁷

Conclusion. It is the purpose of this chapter to present a chronological survey of the Baconian theories. Not

¹³⁶Pearson, op. cit., p. 302.

¹³⁷Fiske, op. cit., p. 404.

all of the hundreds of theories which have been advanced are presented here; it would require a work of far greater scope than this study to include all of them.

A review of the Baconian movement shows that it first started in 1856 and moved rapidly to a peak by the end of the nineteenth century. It has been gradually declining in popularity since the first decade of the twentieth century. It has never been popular with literary scholars, nor has it ever presented a theory logical enough to encourage scholars to do research on the subject. The future of the movement is still uncertain, but it is the opinion of the author of this study that theories will be presented at ever larger intervals until the movement dies a natural death.

CHAPTER IV

THE OXFORDIAN THEORIES

The Shakespearean authorship controversy was dominated by the Baconians until after the first decade of the twentieth century. At that time, other contenders began to appear, but none of them gained the status which had been achieved by Francis Bacon. It was not until 1920 that the theory which was to rank second only to the Baconian theory was first introduced. This claimed that Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford and Lord Bulbeck, was the author of the Shakespeare Works.¹ Since it was first introduced, this theory has dominated the field of the controversy, although the amount of writing supporting de Vere has not equalled that supporting Bacon. It might also be said that the Oxfordians have not matched the heights of absurdity reached by the Baconians.

It will be the purpose of this chapter to explore the Oxfordian theories and their development, beginning with a brief biography of Edward de Vere and ending with general refutations of the Oxfordian theories.

¹The Earl of Oxford is known variously as de Vere and Oxford. For purposes of uniformity, he will be called de Vere in this study unless a direct quotation which calls him Oxford is used.

I. EDWARD DE VERE

Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford and Lord Bulbeck, was born on April 2, 1550. Educated at Cambridge, he succeeded at an early age to the earldom with all its titles, including that of lord great chamberlain, and he was a favorite of Queen Elizabeth. A spendthrift, he wasted all of his inheritance. He was considered a fop; he introduced Italian styles to the men of England and was probably the man satirically portrayed by Gabriel Harvey in Speculum Tuscanisme, a portrait of Italianate Englishmen.² As de Vere became increasingly more eccentric, his behavior and explosive temper put him in danger of losing favor with Elizabeth. He fought in Flanders without her permission, and he once quarrelled with Sir Philip Sidney, an episode that eventually led to Sidney's disgrace. However, de Vere continued his rather precarious existence as a noble of high standing. As lord high chamberlain, he presided over the trial of Mary Queen of Scots in 1586 and participated in the trial of the Earl of Essex and the coronation of James I. His position may have been helped by the fact that he was the son-in-law of Cecil, Lord Burghly, the Queen's great advisor, although de Vere did not often agree with his father-in-law. He died in

²William Rose Benet, ed., "Oxford, Edward de Vere," The Reader's Encyclopedia (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1948), p. 809.

1604 after partially recouping his family fortune by a second marriage to a wealthy woman.

Edward de Vere was the author of some lyric poetry and several popular comedies which have been lost. Twenty-three poems have been definitely identified as his, but most of his poetry was lost with his plays. His work was regarded as typical of such lyric poets of the period as Sir Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, and Sir Walter Raleigh.

In addition to his own writing, de Vere was a patron of several English actors and writers, among whom was John Lyly, who served as his secretary and dedicated Euphues and His England to him.³ It is apparent that Edward de Vere fits the description of the educated courtier sought by the anti-Shakespeareans.

II. THE FIRST OXFORDIAN THEORY

The first person to propose Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, as the author of the Shakespeare Works was J(ohn) Thomas Looney, an English schoolmaster. Looney's book, "Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, appeared in 1920.⁴ It had been

³Sidney Lee, "Edward de Vere," Dictionary of National Biography, Sir Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, editors (London: University of Oxford Press, Humphrey Milford, 1921-1922), XX, 225-29.

⁴J. Thomas Looney, "Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere the Seventeenth Early Oxford (new edition; New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1949).

finished before 1914, but the First World War stopped its publication for six years. Looney took precautions to ensure his position as the first to advance the Oxfordian theory until the book could be published. When it finally came before the public, it gained more attention than such theories usually do because of the endorsement of the noted English novelist and dramatist, John Galsworthy. Galsworthy thought Looney's book was an excellent piece of detective work and he bought many copies, which he presented to his friends.⁵

The first chapter of Looney's book was devoted to discussing the life of Shakespeare. He demonstrated what facts actually were known about the man from Stratford; his approach was that of a Shakespearean. He then made an abrupt change and summed up these facts to show that they really proved nothing about the authorship of the Works. He also stated that Bacon could not possibly have been the author. He went on to discuss his method of research. He started with the premise that the actor Will Shakspere was not the author William Shakespeare. After examining the poem, Venus and Adonis, Looney went through many anthologies of sixteenth century poetry searching for an identical stanza form. He eliminated all but de Vere; a poem called "Women's Changeableness," written by the young Earl, had the same stanza form as Venus and Adonis. Here was Looney's author.

⁵Charles Wisner Barrell, "Afterwards," in Ibid., p. 455.

Looney listed eighteen characteristics he felt were those of the author of the Works. Shakspere the actor did not fit into this outline, but careful examination of de Vere's life showed that he did. Looney elaborated on these eighteen characteristics, demonstrating to his own satisfaction that Shakespeare the actor could not have been the author while de Vere undoubtedly was.⁶

Most of Looney's book was tiresomely repetitious. He reconstructed de Vere's life, showing when and why the works were written. He expounded his belief that many of the Works were autobiographical in nature. For example, it was his belief that de Vere, in writing Hamlet, was writing the story of his own life; Hamlet was Edward de Vere.⁷ The sonnets were also autobiographical, according to Looney. In them, de Vere was telling of his disgrace (which one of his many disgraces is not clear); he knew his writing would be immortal, and he wanted it to be remembered, but he wanted his name to be forgotten. Having gleaned this latter information from the sonnets, Looney decided that this was the reason de Vere had written under an assumed name.⁸

Henry Wriothsesley, third Earl of Southampton, and William Stanley, sixth Earl of Derby, had both been advanced

⁶Ibid., pp. 116-17. ⁷Ibid., p. 394.

⁸Ibid., pp. 173-75.

as contenders for the authorship before Looney's book was published.⁹ Looney did not neglect them; he made them assistants to de Vere in the writing of the Works. Stanley had married de Vere's favorite daughter, Elizabeth, and de Vere took a special interest in the marriage. Since the Stanley authorship theory was based on the idea that Stanley had been writing plays in 1599, and no plays bearing his name were ever found, Looney concluded that Stanley had been aiding his father-in-law in the composition of the Shakespeare Works.¹⁰ As for Wriothsesley, his dealings with Will Shakespeare ended at the time of the death of de Vere in 1604. This was proof enough of Wriothsesley's assistantship. Looney did not clearly explain, but it would appear that he believed that Wriothsesley handled the financial matters in connection with the authorship secret.¹¹ Shakespeare's role was that of the de Vere mask, and as such, he was also an assistant; the money given him by Wriothsesley was for his salary and his silence.¹² Looney's treatment of the parts played by Wriothsesley and Stanley left the author of this study with

⁹The theories proposing Wriothsesley and Stanley as contenders for the authorship are discussed in Chapter VI, pp. 173-76.

¹⁰Looney, op. cit., p. 382.

¹¹Ibid., p. 364. ¹²Ibid., p. 361.

the feeling that Looney had two contenders for the authorship he didn't know how to handle; he couldn't refute their authorship, so he gave both of them places in the Oxfordian theory. The uncertain tone of his writing lends credence to this belief.

Looney was deeply influenced by the fact that the Shakespeare plays appeared in great numbers until the year before the death of de Vere in 1604, but after that there were no authorized publications until the First Folio in 1623.¹³

There are many unfilled gaps in Looney's work. He lacked knowledge of many facts, and his scholarship was faulty. He actually did not prove anything, but his book was the first one to advocate the Oxfordian theory, and it was the foundation for the theory. Later Oxfordians attempted to close the gaps he left.

III. CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE OXFORDIAN THEORIES

J. Thomas Looney's book bore the same relation to the Oxfordian movement that the articles and books by Delia Bacon and W. H. Smith did to the Baconian movement. Once again, the Shakespeare Works and other literary works of the period were subjected to close scrutiny, not for their beauty, but for evidence of de Vere's authorship.

¹³Ibid., p. 366.

Edwin Björkman, who reviewed Looney's book for the Bookman, became interested in the Oxfordian theory and added information overlooked by Looney.¹⁴ Björkman found references to de Vere's contemporary reputation as a poet and playwright in Puttenham's work of 1589 called The Arte of English Poesie, in which it was said:

. . . and in her Majesty's time that now is are sprung up another crew of Courtly makers (poets), noble-men and Gentlemen of Her Majesty's own servants, who have written excellently well as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest of which number is the first that noble gentleman Edward Earl of Oxford.¹⁵

In 1923, Colonel B. R. Ward, a military scholar who had commanded the air defense of London in the First World War and who was the founder of the Oxfordian movement's society, published The Mystery of "Mr. W. H." in support of the de Vere theory.¹⁶

The cryptological approach, predominantly used to "prove" Bacon's authorship, was also used briefly in the cause of de Vere. Two cipher theories supporting de Vere appeared early in the Oxfordian movement and will be discussed here.

Captain B. M. Ward, the son of Colonel Ward and a brilliant scholar at the Royal Military College until interrupted

¹⁴ Edwin Björkman, "Shakespeare?" Bookman, 51 (August, 1920), 677-82.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 680. The spelling has been modernized.

¹⁶ B. R. Ward, The Mystery of "Mr. W. H." (London: Cecil Palmer, 1923).

in his studies by the First World War, introduced his cipher in 1926 in an article entitled "A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres" based on Gascoigne's A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres, published in 1573.¹⁷ Ward claimed sixteen of de Vere's poems were contained in the book. He "proved" his contention with a string cipher.

George Frisbee, a San Franciscan, modified the string cipher for his theory in his book, Edward de Vere, A Great Elizabethan, which appeared in 1931.¹⁸ In his method, Frisbee permitted himself to use not only the first or last letters of words, but any other letters necessary to find the message for which he was looking. He examined the works of Gascoigne, Marlowe, Sir John Harington, Spenser, Raleigh, Sidney, and Anne de Vere, as well as Greville's biography of Sidney, Shakespeare's sonnets, and Puttenham's The Arte of English Poesie.¹⁹ Frisbee found a great abundance of signatures, all of which "proved" that de Vere was the author of much of the Elizabethan literature as well as the man who introduced acrostics into English literature. Frisbee added the touch of sensationalism and absurdity so common to the

¹⁷B. M. Ward, "A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres," The Library, viii (June, 1927), 123-130.

¹⁸George Frisbee, A Great Elizabethan (London: Cecil Palmer, 1931).

¹⁹William F. Friedman and Elizabeth S. Friedman, The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), p. 132.

Baconian theories, although the Oxfordian theories, on the whole, were fairly conservative.

The Friedmans examined the work of both Ward and Frisbee. By using Ward's method, they were able to find the name "Lewis Carroll" in Gascoigne's A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres; by adding Frisbee's method to that of Ward, they were able to find Carroll's real name, "Charles Lutwidge Dodgson," and the title of his great work, Alice in Wonderland, in Gascoigne's book. There was no cryptological validity in either man's use of the string cipher.²⁰

Meanwhile, several simple authorship theories were still being presented. In 1928, B. M. Ward followed his string cipher with a book called The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford.²¹ Though it advocated de Vere's authorship, the book was otherwise an excellent and fairly thorough biography of Edward de Vere.

Many "significant" allusions to the de Vere authorship were discussed in 1929 by Rear Admiral H. H. Holland in Shakespeare Through Oxford Glasses.²² One of the most significant of these allusions was to the crest of de Vere. As

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 131-36.

²¹ B. M. Ward, The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford (London: John Murray, 1928).

²² H. H. Holland, Shakespeare Through Oxford Glasses (London: Search Publishing Company, 1929).

Lord Bulbeck, his crest was a lion holding (or shaking as the Oxfordians believe) a broken spear. This was where de Vere obtained his pseudonym; by coincidence, there was an actor named "Will Shakspere" to act as a mask. There is no information to support Holland's contention about the pseudonym, and his theory seems contrived. The author of this study believes his book might well have been called Oxford Through Holland Glasses.

The most eminent British scholar to join the Oxfordian movement was Dr. Gerald H. Rendall, a divine and classical scholar. Dr. Rendall had been Canon of Chelmsford and principal of the University College in Liverpool before his death at ninety-three years of age in 1945. He was considered to be the dean of British educators and was a highly respected man. It was disturbing to the Shakespearean scholars to find a person of such eminence supporting an anti-Shakespearean theory. Dr. Rendall had always been interested in Shakespeare. Puzzled by the biography of Shakespeare because it did not seem to fit such a person as the author of the Works must have been, Dr. Rendall wrote and published three volumes, the first of which appeared in 1930 and all of which supported Looney's theory. Dr. Rendall spent most of his effort on the sonnets. Shakespeare's Sonnets and Edward de Vere (1930) was an excellent study of both de Vere and Wriothesley

and contained comparisons of de Vere's poetry with that of Shakespeare's.²³ In his book, Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe, Frayne Williams, after examining the quality of de Vere's poetry, stated that any Shakespearean scholars who read Dr. Rendall's book would find confirmation of their belief that the man who wrote the de Vere poems did not write the Shakespeare sonnets and plays. He did not feel that Dr. Rendall's comparison proved de Vere was the author of the Works.²⁴

The next person to advocate the Oxfordian point of view was not so quiet and scholarly as Dr. Rendall had been. Percy Allen, London dramatic correspondent for The Christian Science Monitor, wrote Case for Edward de Vere As "William Shakespeare" in 1930, the same year Dr. Rendall's first work appeared.²⁵ A dedicated Oxfordian, Allen was not content merely to publish his belief in de Vere's authorship; he took part in public debates with the Baconians and discussed his views with all who would listen to him. His next work, which appeared a few years later, was called The Life-Story of Edward de Vere as "William Shakespeare," and it enlarged upon his first book.²⁶

²³Gerald H. Rendall, Shakespeare's Sonnets and Edward de Vere (London: John Murray, 1930).

²⁴Frayne Williams, Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1941), p. 257.

²⁵Percy Allen, Case for Edward de Vere as "William Shakespeare" (London: Search Publishing Company, 1930).

²⁶Percy Allen, The Life Story of Edward de Vere as "William Shakespeare" (London: Search Publishing Company, 1932).

In 1931, Lieutenant Colonel Montague W. Douglas wrote The Earl of Oxford as "Shakespeare."²⁷ The title and contents were similar to the works on the subject which had already appeared, and Douglas added nothing new to the controversy.

In 1933, Admiral Holland again contributed to the Oxfordian movement with Shakespeare, Oxford and Elizabethan Times.²⁸ He offered no new or startling discoveries.

The next word on the de Vere authorship came from the noted pioneer in the field of psychoanalysis, Dr. Sigmund Freud. Freud's statement on the subject, made in 1935, was presented by William McFee in the introduction to the new edition of Looney's book. Freud said:

I no longer believe that . . . the actor from Stratford was the author of the works that have been ascribed to him. Since reading "Shakespeare" Identified, by J. Thomas Looney, I am almost convinced that the assumed name conceals the personality of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.²⁹

Freud's statement would have meant more if he had followed it with research, but the Oxfordians were satisfied with just the declaration because it added one more important name to the list of distinguished Oxfordian advocates.

²⁷ Montague W. Douglas, The Earl of Oxford as "Shakespeare" (London: The Search Publishing Company, 1931).

²⁸ H. H. Holland, Shakespeare, Oxford and Elizabethan Times (London: Search Publishing Company, 1933).

²⁹ Looney, op. cit., p. xiv.

In 1937, Mrs. Eva Turner Clark, a dedicated Oxfordian, wrote a book called The Man Who Was Shakespeare.³⁰ Mrs. Clark recounted the life of de Vere, paralleling it with what was known of the life of the man from Stratford and concluded that de Vere was the author of the Works in question. She found contemporary allusions to de Vere as a man of letters. These allusions had not been discovered by either Ward or Looney, whose books had inspired Mrs. Clark's interest and work.

Mrs. Clark was biased, and she twisted facts to her own advantage. On several occasions, she did not tell the complete facts because they would have been damaging to her case. Her book cannot be called scholarly: There are those who might say that it added to the knowledge of de Vere's life, but this is doubtful since so much of what she wrote was twisted and inaccurate; it would be hard to ascertain what was true fact and what was pro-de Vere fact. Her scornful and derogatory comments concerning those who did not believe as she did precluded any objective study of her work. It was impossible to read what she had written without becoming angry and losing objectivity.

During the 1940's, there was a revival of interest in the Oxfordian theories and in Looney, which was chiefly

³⁰ Eva Turner Clark, The Man Who Was Shakespeare (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1937).

centered in America. The plates and the remaining original copies of Looney's book had been lost in the blitzkrieg in England, and owners of the remaining copies suddenly refused to part with them except for a very high price. No other work concerning the authorship controversy had commanded such popularity or high prices so long after publication. The Oxfordians have taken great pride in this fact.

Charles Wisner Barrell helped this revival of interest in the Oxfordian theories with his book, Elizabethan Mystery Man: A Digest of Evidence, which he published in 1940.³¹ According to Barrell, the collected and connected facts of de Vere's life, his letters, and his writings matched so many of the plots, situations, characterizations, technical tricks of composition, and passages of poetry in the Works that it was impossible to believe anyone but de Vere had been the author. Barrell pointed out that de Vere had travelled extensively in Italy and was deeply engrossed in Italian culture. Six of the plays have Italian settings, and the knowledge of Italian culture shown in these plays, Barrell felt, could only come from one who had visited Italy and not from one whose only travel experience had been the trip from Stratford to London. Barrell also discovered that certain

³¹ Charles Wisner Barrell, Elizabethan Mystery Man: A Digest of Evidence (New York: A Gauthier, 1940).

passages in the personal letters of Oxford to his father-in-law, Burghly, showed situations and, in some cases, the exact phraseology of parts of the Works. The fact that most critics have agreed that the characterization of Polonius in Hamlet was based on Burghly impressed Barrell; would it not be more natural for de Vere to portray his father-in-law than for an uneducated commoner to portray one of England's most prominent statesmen?³²

Barrell continued such loose reasoning all through his book. In the opinion of the author of this study, Barrell proved only that almost any one of the contenders could be fitted into the role of the author of the Works merely by "adjusting" facts to suit the specific contender as Barrell did.

Gelett Burgess, an American humorist, apparently lost his sense of humor over the controversy. In the October 2, 1948 issue of The Saturday Review of Literature, he wrote a letter to the magazine which appeared in the Letters to the Editor column under the title "Pseudonym, Shakespeare."³³ In the following weeks, several letters appeared in answer to Burgess' letter.³⁴ Burgess himself was moved to answer his

³² Ibid., pp. 5-10.

³³ Gelett Burgess, "Pseudonym, Shakespeare," The Saturday Review of Literature, 31 (October 2, 1948), 22.

³⁴ These letters were printed in the following issues: November 6, 1948, pp. 21-22; November 20, 1948, p. 24; December 18, 1948, p. 21; January 20, 1949, p. 22; February 5, 1949, p. 21; and February 19, 1949, p. 22.

critics in letters to the magazine. He stated with asperity that the Elizabethan public records produced nothing that proved Shakespeare was an author. His stated opinion of Shakespeareans was not complimentary. The letters from Burgess revealed a belief that was narrow and unchangeable. He was concerned only with minute, insignificant points, and he rejected any arguments contrary to his own with more venom than accuracy. Perhaps the fact that he was nearly eighty-two years of age when he wrote the letters accounts for his attitude. At any rate, he added no new evidence to further the cause of the Oxfordians.

The next evidence for de Vere's authorship was said to come from the spirit world by way of Percy Allen, the staunch Oxfordian. Allen's experience was described in a United Press report from London which appeared in the Washington Post:

Drama critic Percy Allen reported today he had contacted William Shakespeare, the Earl of Oxford and Francis Bacon in the spirit world and had asked them bluntly: "Who wrote the plays attributed to William Shakespeare?" Shakespeare admitted he was not the sole author of his famous plays and poems and that Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, was his collaborator, Allen said.³⁵

The twelve hundred and eighty-two page book by Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn which appeared in 1952 was much more substantial than Allen's spirit communication had been. Charlton

³⁵ News item in the Washington Post, January 6, 1948.

Ogburn, a lawyer and former teacher of English, and his wife, Dorothy, the author of three mystery novels in the 1930's, called their book This Star of England: "William Shake-speare" Man of the Renaissance.³⁶ The Ogburns defended and supported the cipher method by which B. M. Ward had discovered de Vere's signature in A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres.³⁷ They also gave their support to many of the other Oxfordian theories. However, their main concern was with the life of de Vere and how the Works fitted into his life pattern.

The Ogburns pointed out erroneously that de Vere was unable to claim the plays as his own during his life. He chose the pseudonym "Shake-speare" because the figure on his coat of arms (which represented his title, Lord Bulbeck) was a lion shaking a spear.³⁸ The actor was not a mask; that he bore the same name as de Vere's chosen pseudonym was a coincidence. If the actor from Stratford had any association with the plays, it was because he stole some of them and sold them (this accounted for the faulty quartos).³⁹

The First Folio presented no problem to the Ogburns. They concluded that a decision to publish the plays was made

³⁶ Dorothy Ogburn and Charlton Ogburn, This Star of England: "William Shake-speare" Man of the Renaissance (New York: Coward McCann, Inc., 1952).

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 1257-68. ³⁸ Ibid., p. 945.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 1236-37.

after de Vere's death. Either the daughters and sons-in-law of de Vere called in Jonson, who had participated in the hoax, to help them, or Jonson suggested it and persuaded the de Vere family to join him. At any rate, Heminge and Condell were taken into the confidence of Jonson and the de Veres, and the First Folio was published.⁴⁰

Another factor which influenced the thinking of the Ogburns was that William Camden, in his Britannia of 1605, ignored Shakespeare although he listed the prominent people of Stratford. Either the Ogburns did not explore other works of Camden, or they chose to ignore them. In 1605, Camden had published his Remaines of a Greater Works Concerning Britaine, which was, in part, made up of excerpts from Britannia. Camden spoke of names derived from the type of weapon carried by ancestors; some of the names he listed, for example, were Long-sword, Broad-speare, Shotbolt, and Shake-Speare. Later on in the work, he included Shakespeare's name in a list of great writers of his time.⁴¹ One such oversight by the Ogburns is enough to raise a doubt about all of their work.

In keeping with this idea that Shakespeare of Stratford had no contemporary reputation, the Ogburns stated that

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 1242.

⁴¹ F. E. Holliday, A Shakespeare Companion (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1952), pp. 93-94.

the actor's son-in-law, Dr. Hall, was a more important man in Stratford than his father-in-law. It is fairly easy to revert to the loose thinking of the anti-Shakespearean and answer that Shakespeare was a London playwright, while Hall was an eminent physician of Stratford; a doctor is far more important to a community than a playwright, especially one who does not live there permanently.

The Ogburns used the epitaph as their final argument against the authorship of the man from Stratford. They said:

Finally, the lines on his gravestone are altogether characteristic of William Shakesper of Stratford-on-Avon, but they never could have been an expression of the author of Hamlet, the true William Shake-speare.⁴²

The Ogburns' book is full of surmise and conjecture. It contains no real evidence of de Vere's authorship because their picture of the author can be made to fit too many other people. The scholarship is faulty, and statements are often inaccurate. It is unfortunate that people with the talent possessed by Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn wasted themselves on something as inconclusive as their book.

The latest book to support the de Vere theory appeared in 1955.⁴³ Written by Miss H. Amphlett, it was called Who Was Shakespeare: A New Enquiry and was published in London.⁴⁴

⁴²Ogburn and Ogburn, op. cit., p. 1248.

⁴³At the time of the completion of this study, this is the latest book written on the de Vere authorship.

⁴⁴H. Amphlett, Who Was Shakespeare: A New Enquiry (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1955).

Miss Amphlett presented fourteen characteristics of the author of the Works and concluded that not one of them pertained to Shakespeare but that all of them did pertain to de Vere. It is not necessary to list all of her points here; a few examples will be sufficient to show the line of her reasoning: (2) the author was a man of great learning with knowledge of Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and astronomy; (9) he was a nobleman of old and honorable lineage because of his knowledge of the ways of the nobility (hunting, hawking, and heraldry); (11) a libelous attack had been made on him at some time which defamed his name; (13) he was thriftless and incompetent in money matters.⁴⁵ All of the characteristics suggested by Miss Amphlett describe many noblemen from Henry VIII to Farouk; she really proved nothing.

Miss Amphlett denounced the Disintegrationist theory.⁴⁶ She did not feel that anything as magnificent as the Works could have been written by a "Board of Directors." She believed that any writing other than de Vere's in the Works was done by a manager for adaptation to the stage or by another author after de Vere's death.⁴⁷ Although she proved nothing, Miss Amphlett did not waver in her belief that the Works were written by one man--Edward de Vere.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 45-46.

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the Disintegrationist theories, see Chapter VI.

⁴⁷ Amphlett, op. cit., p. 192.

Undoubtedly others will advocate the authorship of the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, but they will need more concrete proof than that which has already been presented.

IV. OXFORDIAN SOCIETIES AND PUBLICATIONS

The Oxfordians, like the Baconians, gained enough followers to make some kind of organization desirable. Unlike the Baconians, however, who waited twenty-nine years before they started their society; the Oxfordians organized two years after Looney first introduced de Vere as a contender for the authorship. In 1922, Colonel B. R. Ward organized The Shakespeare Fellowship in England to carry on additional research into the life and times of Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford. The name of the organization was somewhat misleading to those interested in true Shakespearean scholarship, but it indicated the feeling of the Oxfordians: de Vere and Shakespeare were one and the same person; the Works had always been known as the Shakespeare Works; hence, their society should be called The Shakespeare Fellowship. The first president of the Fellowship was Sir George Greenwood, who earlier had entered a contender of his own in the controversy.⁴⁸ The Shakespeare Fellowship was active until the beginning of the Second World War. At that

⁴⁸See Chapter VI, p. 173.

time, all activities in England were suspended, but Eva Turner Clark organized an American branch of the Fellowship to carry on the work begun in England.

The publication of the Fellowship was the News-Letter, a bi-monthly magazine which was first issued by the American Fellowship in December of 1939. At the beginning of 1945, the name was changed to The Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly. It has printed the work of those who have done research on the de Vere authorship question; much of the work is based on the findings of Looney.

The Fellowship still meets regularly in America but seldom permits any but Oxfordians to be heard. Its general is unimpressive in appearance, and its meetings are quiet and restrained.

V. GENERAL REFUTATION AND CONCLUSION

General refutation. General refutation of the Oxfordian theories is difficult because these theories do not really prove anything. Almost any member of the nobility of Elizabethan times can be fitted into the Oxfordian concepts of the author. There is, however, one point which should be discussed.

Much of the Oxfordian contention is based on the fact that de Vere had to use a pseudonym. Looney believed that

it was because de Vere's name had been disgraced;⁴⁹ some of his followers agreed with him. Most other Oxfordians believed that de Vere assumed the pseudonym because the nobility could not associate with the theater without disgrace. If any of these people mentioned contemporary allusions to de Vere as a writer, these allusions did not satisfactorily account for de Vere's use of a pseudonym. A more complete study of the Elizabethan period would reveal to the Oxfordians that de Vere's association with the theater was quite open. He acted in plays at Court, as did many other nobles, but more important, he was the acknowledged author of plays and poems in his own day. Francis Meres, whose Palladis Tamia was discussed in Chapter II of this study, wrote that Oxford was the best writer of comedy. In this same work, Shakespeare was also mentioned and his plays were listed.⁵⁰ If Meres mentioned de Vere as a writer of comedy, this means that de Vere was known to be a writer; if one accepts the contention that de Vere, using a pseudonym, wrote the Works, this indicates that de Vere acknowledged only a part of his works. This is not logical and makes the foundation of the Oxfordian movement very unstable.

⁴⁹Looney, op. cit., p. 173.

⁵⁰Williams, loc. cit.

One other point might be mentioned here. Edward de Vere died in 1604. The Oxfordians claimed that the writing of the Works ceased at that time. They were asking the world to believe that the later plays, such as King Lear, The Tempest, and Henry VIII were written before 1604, but they could not prove it and often did not try. The statement that since de Vere died in 1604 no further Shakespeare plays were written stood bald and unproven and left another gap in their reasoning.

Much is known of the life of Edward de Vere. Strangely enough, Oxfordian B. M. Ward's The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford is an excellent biography. Nothing in de Vere's busy life actually indicated he was secretly writing plays. Frayne Williams, the author of Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe, left the impression that Ward's work, written to bolster the Oxfordian movement, helped refute the Oxfordian theories by accounting so well for all of de Vere's life.⁵¹

Conclusion. The Oxfordian theories, on the whole, are more conservative and less sensational (except for Allen's excursion beyond the grave and the ciphers of Ward and Frisbee) than the Baconian theories. In comparison with the Baconian theories, they are colorless and prove nothing more than that de Vere lived during the Elizabethan period.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 257n.

The Oxfordian movement is quiet now, but it is not dead. The Shakespeare Fellowship is still active and is working to support de Vere's authorship of the Works. At any time a new book or article advocating the Oxfordian cause may appear on a publisher's list or in a magazine.

CHAPTER V

THE MARLOVIAN THEORY

The great majority of the contenders chosen by the anti-Shakespeareans have been men of the Elizabethan nobility whose noble ancestry went far back into English history. The exception to this was Christopher Marlowe, the son of a cobbler and the first commoner to be proposed as the author of the Works.¹ Marlowe has been a perennial contender, but it has always been difficult to reconcile his early death in 1593 with the chronology of the plays, and Marlovian theories have never been numerous or enduring. There have been proposals that Marlowe collaborated with Shakespeare, and some of the Disintegrationists have included Marlowe as a member of the group of authors responsible for the Works.² However, it was not until 1955, when Calvin Hoffman proposed Marlowe as a sole contender and thereby gained world-wide attention that the Marlovian theory became a real part of the controversy.

Hoffman's Marlovian theory will be the subject of this chapter. His theory, while it does not have the importance

¹As nearly as can be ascertained, Christopher Marlowe is the only commoner to be proposed as the author of the Works who gained any following. Other commoners have appeared in the various Disintegrationist theories but have never been proposed as the sole author.

²See Chapter VI for a discussion of the Disintegrationist theories.

or the number of advocates which the Baconian and Oxfordian theories have, is being given a whole chapter because of its recency in the newspaper headlines, and because it is an example of what can happen when an anti-Shakespearean theory is put to the test. Hoffman's work is interesting and fascinating, but only as a fictionalized murder mystery, and it shows the lengths to which those who disclaim Shakespeare will go. Hoffman's theory is also the one which first interested the author of this study in the anti-Shakespearean controversy.

The first section of this chapter will contain an account of Marlowe's life and death, because the murder of Christopher Marlowe is an important aspect of Hoffman's theory. The next section will contain a discussion of the theory itself. Hoffman's background and research, as well as the other Marlovian theories he discovered and his work in England will be given attention. The final section will be concerned with Hoffman's failure and with general refutations of his theory.

I. CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Christopher Marlowe, who has been called the father of English tragedy, was born in Canterbury in 1564. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 1584. There has always been some

question about the Master of Arts degree he received in 1587. Because he was absent too often, Marlowe was denied the degree until the government ordered that it be conferred. Many scholars feel that Marlowe was absent because he was working as a secret agent of the government. For this reason, the government ordered the university to grant the degree.³

After graduation, Marlowe spent some time as a member of the Earl of Nottingham's players and probably was doing some work as a secret agent of the government. He led a life of dissipation which, when combined with his atheistic declarations and his participation in various kinds of intrigue, served to keep him in trouble with the Court and government circles. Born in the same year as Shakespeare, Marlowe was killed in 1593, the year Shakespeare was just beginning his work.⁴

Whatever else he was, Marlowe was also a writer. There are six plays which can be assigned with certainty to him. Of these six, four are considered major works in English literature: Tamburlaine the Great (c. 1587-1588),⁵

³This discussion of Marlowe's activities as a graduate student was taken from the lectures of Professor Martha Pierce in the Development of the English Drama course at the College of the Pacific. Permission to use secured.

⁴Sidney Lee, "Christopher Marlowe," Dictionary of National Biography, Sir Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, editors (London: University of Oxford Press, Humphrey Milford, 1921-1922), XII, pp. 1065-75.

⁵Dates in parentheses denote dates when these plays were first acted.

The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus (1588-1592), The Jew of Malta (1592), and Edward II (1593). In his plays, Marlowe rebuilt English drama. His themes differed greatly from those which had been used previously in English tragedy. His major theme was the heroic struggle of a heroic personality who rose to great heights only to be defeated physically. The struggles of the hero were epic in nature; nothing about the hero or his situation was portrayed as being small. Marlowe's minor characters were unimportant, and his women characters were stiff and wooden. He had many faults which might have improved if he had lived longer, but it is doubtful whether his humor or his portrayal of minor characters would ever have improved.⁶ There is no question, however, about his contribution as a dramatist. He was the first great English dramatist, and he prepared the way for Shakespeare.⁷

Marlowe also stood high among the poets of his day. Among his poems were The Passionate Shepherd to His Love, his translation of Ovid's Amores, and his narrative poem, Hero and Leander, left unfinished at his death and completed by George Chapman in 1598.

There are those who feel that Marlowe's greatest contribution to literature was in the use of blank verse. This

⁶Ashley Thorndike, "Christopher Marlowe," Encyclopedia Americana (1958 ed.), 18, 304.

⁷Ibid., pp. 303-04.

feeling was expressed very well by Homer A. Watt and William W. Watt:

But Marlowe's greatest metrical contribution is the "mighty line" of his dramatic blank verse. He took the stiff iambic pentameter of earlier plays and made of it a flexible, varied, unrestrained, and powerful vehicle for his tragedies.⁸

Before Marlowe, tragedy and blank verse in English were nothing; by working with them in his way, he prepared the way for some of the greatest of English writers to do their work.

II. MARLOWE'S DEATH

The murder of Christopher Marlowe on May 30, 1593, is the most important element in Calvin Hoffman's Marlovian theory. It is necessary to present the details of that murder and the events leading up to it.

Sir Thomas Walsingham, a man powerful in government and Court circles, had taken a great interest in Christopher Marlowe. Under Walsingham's patronage, Marlowe lived at the Walsingham home in Chislehurst. There are those who feel the bond between the two men was more than that of patron and poet or that of friendship. It was at Chislehurst that Marlowe was arrested in May, 1593, after Thomas Kyd had

⁸Homer A. Watt and William W. Watt, "Christopher Marlowe," A Dictionary of English Literature (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1955), p. 186.

accused him of atheism. Marlowe had been a member of a group of freethinkers; he had not only declared his feelings but had also written about them. The charge of atheism was a serious one at that time, but Marlowe was allowed to go free on bail on May 20. Nine days later, Richard Baines brought charges of heresy and treason against him. While the warrant for his arrest was being drawn up, Marlowe went to the port town of Deptford, where he and three friends, Paley, Skeres, and Ingram Frizer (all employees of Walsingham), spent the day of May 30 talking at an inn. After the evening meal, there was a quarrel, and Ingram Frizer stabbed Marlowe. Deptford was within the Queen's verge⁹ since she was visiting at Kew, and Elizabeth's coroner went to the scene of the murder. He declared that Marlowe's death was justifiable homicide and freed Frizer. Marlowe was quietly buried on June 1, 1593.¹⁰

There are still many unanswered questions about Marlowe's death. Was it really caused by a quarrel between Marlowe and the unsavory Frizer? What did the four men discuss all day? Was Marlowe deliberately murdered because people in high places were afraid of what he would reveal if

⁹The verge was the twelve-league area around any place where the monarch was visiting and over which the monarch's jurisdiction superseded that of local authority.

¹⁰The stabbing incident was confirmed by Lee, op. cit., p. 1072.

he were allowed to come to trial? Why did the Queen's coroner refuse to turn the investigation over to local authorities, as was the usual custom? Why was everything done so quickly and so silently after Marlowe was killed? Why did Marlowe's intimate friend, Sir Thomas Walsingham, retain in his employ Ingram Frizer after Frizer had killed Marlowe? Did Marlowe really die that day? These and many other unanswered questions place Marlowe's death squarely in the middle of the intrigue which was rampant in Elizabeth's court.

The coroner called Marlowe's murder "a great reckoning in a little room," and the whole affair is as exciting and mysterious as any detective novel. Unfortunately, in the case of Marlowe, there was no omniscient detective to reveal all of the answers.

III. HOFFMAN'S MARLOVIAN THEORY

Calvin Hoffman is a drama critic with a weekly column in several Long Island newspapers. He has written this column for nearly twenty years; prior to that, he had been a reporter, poet, playwright, seaman, and manuscript reader for motion picture studios. He first became interested in the Marlovian theory some seventeen years before the publication of his book, The Murder of the Man Who Was "Shakespeare," in 1955. He said in the introduction of his book that it was not by denying Shakespeare that his belief in Marlowe began;

it began with the growing conviction that only Christopher Marlowe could have written the Works.¹¹

When he started his research, Hoffman believed himself to be one of the first to put forth the Marlowe theory in writing. After he had been working about twelve years, he discovered that there had been others before him. In 1895, Wilbur G. Zeigler wrote It Was Marlowe, in which he fictionalized the death of Marlowe by reversing the usual historical account.¹² Zeigler had Frizer stabbed by Marlowe; later he had Marlowe stabbed by Ben Jonson. In 1923, Archie Webster, in a six-page magazine article, stated his belief that Marlowe had written the sonnets.¹³ Hoffman also discovered that several of the Disintegrationists had included Marlowe in their groups.¹⁴

During his seventeen years of research, Hoffman traveled to England, France, and Denmark, and read old wills, old court records, and old books by the hundreds. He also visited archives, churchyards, graveyards, and libraries in his search for evidence. He read, read again, and compared the

¹¹"Calvin Hoffman, The Murder of the Man Who Was "Shakespeare" (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1955), p. xvii.

¹²William G. Zeigler, It Was Marlowe (Chicago: Donahue, Henneberry and Company, 1895).

¹³Discussed in Hoffman, op. cit., p. xiii, n. bibliographical details available.

¹⁴Ibid.

works of Shakespeare and Marlowe and found over a thousand parallelisms in their writings. When he had finished all of this research, he set down his findings in his two hundred and thirty-two page book, The Murder of the Man Who Was "Shakespeare."

Although the bulk of Hoffman's work concerned the parallelisms in the writings of Shakespeare and Marlowe, his whole theory was based on his reconstruction of the murder.¹⁵ He felt that the lack of facts and the aura of mystery which surrounded the death of Marlowe paralleled closely the lack of facts about Shakespeare and the mystery that surrounded the author of the Works. He believed that the parallel mysteries could be solved if Marlowe's murder mystery were solved. His solution was simple: Marlowe was not murdered at Deptford in 1593. Hoffman's version of the Deptford incident and the events that led up to it follows.

Sir Thomas Walsingham, with all of his powerful connections, knew that Marlowe was in great danger. He could not save Marlowe; no one could. He could, however, do something to prevent the burning at the stake which would be Marlowe's fate as a heretic. He began to build his scheme slowly. He would have Marlowe "murdered." For three reasons, Walsingham picked Deptford as the town for the murder: first,

¹⁵There is a short, interesting account of Hoffman's reconstruction on pp. 83-102 of the July, 1955 issue of Coronet magazine.

the Queen would be at Kew and that would place Deptford within the verge; second, Deptford was a seaport and there were many foreign sailors who would be unknown to the townspeople if one of them were chosen to be the body of Marlowe; and third, Deptford was close to Chislehurst so that Walsingham could supervise the plot. Walsingham had influence with the Queen's servants, and he bribed Danby, the Queen's coroner, threatening him with death if he ever revealed the secret.

The stage was set. A sailor was killed and dressed in Marlowe's clothes. Marlowe spent the day in Deptford with three of Walsingham's employees. When the time came, Marlowe was "stabbed"; the Queen's coroner was called, and the body was certified as being that of Marlowe. The burial was quickly and quietly accomplished, and Christopher Marlowe was free.¹⁶

Hoffman had no direct evidence to prove where Marlowe went after the "murder," but he believed that the poet crossed over into France and from there went to Italy. Marlowe did not lose contact with Walsingham; he sent his patron every poem and play he wrote. The sonnets were Marlowe's expression of his exile and his homesickness. They also contained hidden allusions to the "murder." Walsingham felt that the Works had to be published in fairness to the exiled Marlowe,

¹⁶Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 93-98.

and he searched for a scrivener and for a mask. The scrivener was probably Thomas Smith, to whom Walsingham later left a bequest of forty shillings, and the mask was the actor, William Shakespeare. Smith recopied the Marlowe manuscripts to eliminate the chance that someone would recognize the handwriting; Shakespeare presented these manuscripts to the theater as his own.¹⁷ If Marlowe ever returned to England, it was to live in hiding in Walsingham's home.¹⁸

As part of the evidence to support his murder theory, Hoffman brought in the fact that Frizer, Skeres, and Poley were employees of Walsingham. As soon as Frizer was released on a plea of self-defense, he was taken back into the employ of Walsingham. Considering the friendship between Walsingham and Marlowe, this was an abnormal action unless Walsingham knew Marlowe was not dead.¹⁹ Refutation of Hoffman's theory about Frizer's continued employment by Walsingham is not difficult if one utilizes the loose reasoning of Hoffman. Walsingham may actually have ordered Marlowe killed. If others feared what Marlowe would reveal at his trial, Walsingham may have had more to fear than any of them. Frizer could have carried out Walsingham's orders, and for this reason have been kept in Walsingham's employ.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 101-06. ¹⁸Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 84-85.

More supporting evidence was added by Hoffman in the form of the coroner's report. Coroner Danby described the Deptford incident as "great reckoning in a little room." In Act III, Scene 111 of As You Like It, Touchstone says, "It strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room." The coroner's report had been hidden away, and no one saw it, supposedly, until the twentieth century. How did Shakespeare get the wording of the report? If Hoffman's loose style of reasoning is again employed, an explanation is not difficult. Marlowe's death must have caused some kind of a stir in literary circles, and it is just possible that the coroner's words were common gossip in the tavern where the theater people met.

The evidence offered by Hoffman in support of his theory is very convincing until one examines it more closely and sees the gaps. The greatest of these is the idea of keeping the secret when so many people were involved. Danby, Frizer, Paley, Skeres, Smith, and Shakespeare were only a few of those who had to be entrusted with the secret. Even if Smith and Shakespeare did not know the identity of the author of the manuscripts, they knew there was some kind of conspiracy. If Marlowe returned to England, as Hoffman believed he did, the list of those trusted had to be extended to include at least a few of Walsingham's servants. It is too difficult to believe that all of those entrusted with the

secret could have been so silent about it that no hint escaped.

There are other gaps in Hoffman's murder story which are revealed by careful reading and consideration. A full discussion of these could be extended into another book the length of Hoffman's.

Having laid the foundation for his theory with his reconstruction of the murder story, Hoffman went on to discuss the evidence for his belief in the Marlowe authorship. Shakespeare was first noted as an author in 1593 and not before; Marlowe died in 1593. Hoffman believed these two facts were connected. He said:

Four months after the alleged "assassination" of Marlowe (in September, 1593) the name "William Shakespeare" appears before the world for the very first time--also for the very first time as a writer--with a poem, Venus and Adonis. This poem bears such an astonishing stylistic resemblance to Marlowe's poem Hero and Leander, that conservative students state that the same hand might well have written both.²⁰

The answer to this may lie in the fact that Shakespeare borrowed plots, ideas, styles, words--whatever was needed--wherever he could get them. In his earliest period, he was an imitator. Hero and Leander was popular; it would have been natural for Shakespeare to imitate it in Venus and Adonis.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 201.

The "Mr. W. H." of the dedication of the sonnets did not escape Hoffman's attention. This question has been a controversial one for as long as there has been Shakespearean scholarship. Hoffman had no difficulty in finding "Mr. W. H."; he was Sir Thomas Walsingham, who frequently hyphenated his name to read Walsing-Ham.²¹ It is useless to refute this; there was a "Mr. W. H." in the lives of most of the contenders.

The First Folio also received Hoffman's consideration. He argued that Heminge and Condell did not have enough education to have written the dedication. He demonstrated that the dedication of the First Folio was a paraphrase of Pliny's Natural History. It was his contention that the dedication was written by someone other than Heminge and Condell; who did the writing was not important because the object was to keep the association of the plays with Shakespeare, and by selecting two of Shakespeare's associates, the true author kept the association. In other words, the use of Heminge and Condell as masks for the person who was writing the dedication for Marlowe, who, in turn, was using Shakespeare as a mask, only helped to deepen the mystery and keep the real identity of the author a secret.²² Such a hopeless entanglement would be an ideal plot for a modern mystery writer.

²¹Ibid., p. 117.

²²Ibid., pp. 179-81.

Ben Jonson also entered into Hoffman's theory. Hoffman believed that Jonson did not know Shakespeare as a man. Jonson was often hired to write eulogies, dedications, and laudations for all kinds of works. Jonson was hired by the perpetrators of the Marlowe plot to write all of the works in which he mentioned Shakespeare. Jonson did not know that Marlowe was the author of the Shakespeare plays; he wrote about Shakespeare because he was hired to do so. Hoffman asserted that there is no reference to Jonson's ever having known Shakespeare.²³ This assertion can be answered with the fact that there is no reference to Jonson's not having known Shakespeare.

The previously discussed Mendenhall Technique was used by Hoffman to demonstrate Marlowe's authorship. When Dr. Mendenhall was applying his technique to the Baconian theory, he used, among others, the works of Marlowe for his control. He found that Marlowe was the author who came the closest to agreeing with Shakespeare's use of words. Hoffman found this very encouraging to his cause.²⁴ It seems strange, however, that if the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare were as nearly identical as Hoffman believed, Dr. Mendenhall did not make a positive statement to the effect that the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare were as nearly identical as Hoffman believed, Dr.

²³ Ibid., pp. 189-93.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 137-40.

Mendenhall did not make a positive statement to the effect that the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare were written by one and the same man. The anti-Shakespearean controversy was at its peak when Dr. Mendenhall applied his test; it is strange that no one paid any attention to the resemblance until fifty years later, when Hoffman took up the cause of Marlowe.

Much of Hoffman's argument was based on parallelism in the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare; he found over a thousand parallels after reading the works of these two men. Some were too far-fetched to be considered; some were truly parallels. Only two examples of these will be given here. The first example shows great similarity:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?
Marlowe, Dr. Faustus (picturing Helen of Troy)

. . . She is a pearl
Whose price hath launched above a thousand ships.
Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida (referring
to Helen of Troy)

The second example shows very little similarity:

Weep not for Mortimer
That scorns the world, and as a traveller
Goes to discover countries yet unknown.
Marlowe, Edward II,

The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns.
Shakespeare, Hamlet,

It is suggested that those interested in this parallelism read not only Hoffman's book, but also other books presenting other contenders; there are parallels between the works of most of the writers of the Elizabethan period.

Hoffman's book, The Murder of the Man Who Was "Shakespeare," cannot be recommended as scholarly reading, but it can be recommended for those who enjoy detective fiction.

IV. HOFFMAN'S FAILURE

Calvin Hoffman's ideas, arguments, and beliefs were all set down in his book. However, he also believed that somewhere there was tangible proof that Marlowe was the author of the Shakespeare Works. All the time he was doing research for his book, he was looking for this proof. He searched Sir Thomas Walsingham's estate thoroughly; he went all over Normandy looking for the place where Marlowe may have spent at least a part of his exile; Marlowe had visited a monastery in France as a youth, and Hoffman searched for proof that Marlowe sought refuge there after the "murder"; he went to Elsinore in Denmark to see if there were any indications that Marlowe may have hidden there. Hoffman was not discouraged by the fruitlessness of these trips. He still believed that somewhere there was proof of Marlowe's authorship.²⁵

During his travels, Hoffman looked for a strong box which was mentioned in the will of Sir Thomas Walsingham. It was Hoffman's belief that Sir Thomas put the original Marlowe manuscripts of the Shakespeare Works in that box.

²⁵Robert Potute, "Literary Sleuth," Senior Scholastic, 64 (April 7, 1954), 6.

He finally decided that the box was in the tomb of Sir Thomas, who was buried in St. Nicholas Church at Scadbury, his estate at Chislehurst. Hoffman sought permission to open the tomb, but Canon Lumb of St. Nicholas Church felt such an act was a desecration and blacked the enterprise. However, Hoffman was persistent in his efforts, and the consistory court of Chislehurst finally granted permission in 1956. On May 1, 1956, what was thought to be the cover of the tomb was removed. However, it was only a decorative cover; only sand and loose tile were found. The brick floor that covered the crypt was topped with a six-inch hole, and after a light was lowered, Hoffman looked in. All that could be seen was a lead-covered coffin which Hoffman was not permitted to open. The tomb was sealed, and authorities said it would not be opened again.

The newspapers and magazines in the United States and Britain were not kind to Hoffman. Suitable lines from Shakespeare and other writers were used for humor in headlines and stories. Hoffman was not discouraged by either his failure to find what he saw or the pointed humor of the journalists and columnists. He felt there was proof, and he expressed his determination to find it. When he left England, he declared his intention of continuing the search. He also revealed that an unidentified American had offered \$2,800 reward for proof that Marlowe was the author of the Works. With this reward

and all of the publicity, it is surprising that others have not taken up the cause. It is also surprising that Hoffman has offered no further evidence to his theory.

V. GENERAL REFUTATION AND CONCLUSION

General refutation. Specific refutations of Calvin Hoffman's ideas have been made as each idea was presented. On the whole, the book was unscholarly; it offered no truly concrete proof of anything. Hoffman put thoughts and words into the minds and mouths of those who were involved, particularly Marlowe and Walsingham; he described their feelings as each step of the plot evolved. The book was filled with the sensationalism and cheap drama of a badly written detective novel. The fact that it did not inspire the formation of a Marlovian society or attract advocates who made their beliefs public is a greater refutation than any written words.

One of the most important arguments against Marlowe's authorship is the question of characterization found in the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare. Marlowe's plays revolved around a superman hero who overcame everyone and everything in his rise to success and who was defeated but only physically. This was a Renaissance concept, and Shakespeare used it to a certain extent. But there the resemblance in characterization between the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare

ended. Marlowe was incapable of adequately portraying women; his women are all wooden and alike. Shakespeare's women characters are beautifully drawn; even in his first period, he was able to give the theater such wonderful women as Katherine and Portia. Marlowe's minor characters are incidental to the plot and are never clearly defined. In Shakespeare's plays, the minor characters are as finely drawn as his main characters; Puck, Launcelot Gobbo, the Fool in King Lear, and Polonius illustrate this point. It is hard to believe that Marlowe, if he were alive, would have developed so much in less than a year that he could go from the inadequate portrayal of women and minor characters of Edward II (1593) to the portrayal of Juliet and Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet (1593).

Another argument against Marlowe's authorship lies in the way he wrote. His plays were wholly concerned with the heroes; the plots were unrelieved by romance and/or comedy. On the other hand, Shakespeare's starkest dramas had some comic relief; the porter in Macbeth, the grave diggers in Hamlet, and the nurse and friar in Romeo and Juliet exemplify this. Beautiful love scenes and/or scenes portraying romantic interest can be found in most of his tragedies. Again,

it is hard to believe that Marlowe could have developed so quickly in an area in which he had been so sadly lacking.²⁶

Conclusion. It is the belief of the author of this study that Marlowe is the least likely candidate for the authorship of the Works. In the first place, Hoffman did not prove that Marlowe was alive to write the Works. In the second place, though Marlowe and Shakespeare had much in common in their writings, the differences, as discussed here, were too great for them to have been one and the same man.

²⁶Parts of the discussion of characterization in Marlowe and Shakespeare were taken from the lectures of Professor Martha Pierce in the Development of English Drama course at the College of the Pacific. Permission to use secured.

CHAPTER VI

OTHER CONTENDERS FOR THE AUTHORSHIP OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

The theories which advocated the authorship of Francis Bacon, Edward de Vere, and Christopher Marlowe are responsible for the majority of the literature written about the controversy in books, magazines, and newspapers. However, other contenders were proposed at one time or another. Their role in the whole field of the controversy was only minor, but their champions made some contributions to the growing library on the authorship question. They did not have the following or the bulk of literature written about them that Bacon, de Vere, and Marlowe did, and a discussion of them can be covered in this one chapter, the first section of which will be devoted to a discussion of the Disintegrationist theories, and the second section to a discussion of all of the remaining contenders.

I. THE DISINTEGRATIONIST THEORIES

Up to this point in the study, all of the theories discussed have been single authorship theories. That is, each of the various contenders was believed by his champion to have been the sole author of the Shakespeare Works. However, there were also theories which advocated the authorship of a group of writers. These group theories have also

been called "proprietary," "synthetic," "editorial," "integrationist," and "disintegrationist," but for purposes of uniformity in this study they will be called Disintegrationist or Group theories. The Disintegrationists have proposed groups which among them included most writers, both known and unknown, of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Disintegrationists have felt that their claims were supported by an entry in Thomas Heywood's diary which indicated that collaboration among several authors was a common practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Research has shown that this was true, and this fact, together with the knowledge that the work of other authors is apparent in some of the plays, gave the Disintegrationists the foundation for their belief.¹

The first Disintegrationist was Delia Bacon. The Baconians have always claimed her as their founder, and it is true that her articles and books were responsible to a great extent for the Baconian movement. However, Miss Bacon was actually a Disintegrationist. It may be recalled that her theory first appeared in 1856 and was expanded in 1857 into the book, The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded.² She proposed a group of authors of whom Francis

¹ Gilbert Slater, Seven Shakespeares (London: Cecil Palmer, 1931), pp. 147-49.

² This book was discussed in Chapter III, page 46.

Bacon was editor-in-chief; this was the reason for the Baconian claim that she was one of them. The other members of Miss Bacon's group were Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Buckhurst, Lord Paget, and Edward de Vere. Miss Bacon believed that these men wrote under the name of Shakespeare because they wanted to write works which would expound their liberal political attitude; they could not freely do this under their own names.

The next Disintegrationist theory appeared in 1881 when (James) Appleton Morgan's book, The Shakespeare Myth, was published.³ Morgan had been president of the Shakespeare Society of New York for many years and was one of the most distinguished and scholarly of the Disintegrationists. He gave Shakespeare a place in the group as stage-manager, stage-editor, and copyist, a Jack-of-all trades of the theater. Morgan believed that Shakespeare recopied for the theater what his more accomplished colleagues had written, and in the course of this rewriting, probably interpolated some of his own ideas and changed the Works to some extent.⁴

³ Appleton Morgan, The Shakespeare Myth; William Shakespeare and Circumstantial Evidence (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Company, 1881).

⁴ William F. Friedman and Elizabeth S. Friedman, The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), p. 8.

In his study of Shakespeare's life and work, Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe, Frayne Williams summarized Morgan's theory and his own reaction to it:

Mr. Morgan presented a theory that the plays of Shakespeare were written by several persons in collaboration with such figures as Southampton, Raleigh, Essex, Rutland, Montgomery, and a "needy but ambitious" scholar named Bacon! In passing, it might be suggested that it is impossible to imagine Falstaff being created by a syndicate of dilettante, assisted by a needy scholar.⁵

Morgan may also have seen an error in his own thinking, for he switched his views to those of the Shakespeareans some years later, an act which made him unpopular with all anti-Shakespeareans.⁶

In 1892, Thomas William White published a book which he called Our English Homer.⁷ The title referred to the controversy over Homer's authorship which had been an issue earlier than the Shakespearean authorship question. White proposed Bacon as editor and leader of a group in which Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, George Peele, Samuel Daniel, and Thomas Lodge participated.⁸

⁵Frayne Williams, Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1941), p. 250.

⁶Friedman and Friedman, loc. cit.

⁷Thomas W. White, Our English Homer: Shakespeare Historically Considered (London: S. Low, Marston and Company, Ltd., 1892).

⁸Friedman and Friedman, loc. cit.

Another group theory was presented in 1904 by John Hawley Stotsenberg in a book which he called Impartial Study of the Shakespeare Title.⁹ Stotsenberg's group consisted of Francis Bacon as editor and Michael Drayton, Thomas Dekker, Anthony Munday, Henry Chettle, Thomas Heywood, John Webster, Thomas Middleton, and Henry Porter as members.¹⁰

An approach that used a musical analogy was chosen by Harold Bayley in 1906 in his book, The Shakespeare Symphony.¹¹ The book presented a parallel between the dramatists of the Elizabethan period and a great symphony orchestra with all of the members playing together to produce the Shakespeare Works.¹²

The next book of any note to advocate a group theory did not appear until 1930. It was written by Gilbert Standen and was entitled Shakespeare Authorship: A Summary of Evidence. It was Standen's belief that a group was formed by the government as a Propaganda Department to write patriotic plays which would inspire national feeling during the war with Spain. Standen's theory was different from the group theories which had appeared before his; he chose de Vere

⁹John H. Stotsenberg, Impartial Study of the Shakespeare Title (Louisville: J. P. Morton and Company, 1904).

¹⁰Friedman and Friedman, loc. cit.

¹¹Harold Bayley, The Shakespeare Symphony (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1906).

¹²Gilbert Standen, Shakespeare Authorship: A Summary of Evidence (London: Cecil Palmer, 1930), p. 17.

as the leader rather than Bacon. Standen claimed, however, that Bacon kept the group together after the death of de Vere in 1604 and that when the war with Spain was over, the group wrote such plays as Hamlet and King Lear to fight Catholicism. According to Standen, Marlowe was a member of the group until he was killed in 1593; Shakespeare then took his place.¹³

Standen's Disintegrationist theory was actually the Oxford theory all over again. He used all of the arguments for de Vere as master-mind of the group that the Oxfordians used for de Vere as the sole author of the Works.¹⁴

Standen wrote with a great deal of confidence, but he ignored many of the known facts about Shakespeare when they did not serve his purpose. He also gave national and patriotic importance to plays which had, in all likelihood been written only for production in the theater.

In 1931, Dr. Gilbert Slater, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and at one time the President of Ruskin College, Oxford, proposed a group theory in a book entitled Seven Shakespeares.¹⁵ Dr. Slater's "seven Shakespeares" were Bacon, (as editor), Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, Sir

¹³Ibid., pp. 16-31.

¹⁴For a discussion of the Oxfordian theories, see Chapter IV.

¹⁵Gilbert Slater, Seven Shakespeares (London: Cecil Palmer, 1931).

Walter Raleigh, William Shakespeare, Edward de Vere, William Stanley, and Christopher Marlowe.

Much of Dr. Slater's book was devoted to a discussion of Christopher Marlowe. He believed that the other members of the group were amateurs at playwrighting; Marlowe was the professional and supplied the technique of play construction for the other six. The fact that Marlowe was killed in 1593 did not deter Dr. Slater any more than it did Calvin Hoffman. Dr. Slater believed that Marlowe had gone on a secret mission, and that when he came back, Marlowe had to hide because he had been officially declared dead. It was as simple as that.

Dr. Slater's theory, as it concerned Marlowe, was based on conjecture and not facts. As for the other members of the group, they have all been contenders (with the exception of the Countess of Pembroke) in single authorship theories. It appears to the author of this study that Dr. Slater, unable to believe in the authorship of the actor from Stratford, found that he could believe only in parts of the other authorship theories. For this reason, he put them together into a group theory and added the only professional, Marlowe, to the group to lend credence to his idea. His arguments were not impressive, nor did he ever appear to be completely assured of his own belief. It is sad to find a scholar of such stature involved in work which has so little foundation.

It has been pointed out in this study that the cipher theories were used primarily to prove that Bacon was the author of the Works;¹⁶ it was also noted that two cipher theories were offered in support of Edward de Vere.¹⁷ One other cipher theory of importance was presented, and it advocated a group theory. This cipher was important, not because of its scholarly revelations about the authorship, but because it is an example of what participation in the controversy can lead otherwise normal and sane people to believe.

The founders of this cipher theory were Dr. Wallace McCook Cunningham, a noted economist, and Mrs. Maria Bauer. Their ideas were more spectacular than any that had gone before them; they chose Francis Bacon as the leader or "Great Architect" to a group of nearly seventy men, including Ben Jonson, Sir Francis Drake, Henry Wotton, Lancelot Andrewes, Sir Walter Raleigh, Thomas More, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, and Miles, Joshua, and Thomas Bodley among other Freemasons and Rosicrucians.¹⁸

Dr. Cunningham and Mrs. Bauer, working separately, used the same system and got the same results. Dr. Cunningham

¹⁶ See Chapter III, pp.

¹⁷ See Chapter IV, p.

¹⁸ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

first revealed his cipher in 1940 in a book which he called The Tragedy of Sir Francis Bacon, Prince of England.¹⁹ He called his system the "Masonic Code," although it did not resemble the code which was used by early Masons.²⁰ He not only named his code for the Masons, but he also relied heavily on them for his theory. He believed that the Masons met in a room at the Mermaid Tavern, where they wrote the plays. Once a month in this same room, the Wild Goose Club (all of whose members were Masons) held a dinner at which Shakespeare was a singing waiter.²¹

Dr. Cunningham was sent to Colonel and Mrs. Friedman by General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., the vice-president of Doubleday-Doran. General Roosevelt wanted Dr. Cunningham's cipher verified before he would consent to publish the book. The Friedmans were able to disprove Dr. Cunningham's cipher theory and even went to the extreme of "proving" by the use of Dr. Cunningham's method that Theodore Roosevelt wrote Julius Caesar and Bacon stole it from him.²²

¹⁹Wallace McCook Cunningham, The Tragedy of Sir Francis Bacon, Prince of England (Los Angeles: The Philosopher's Press, 1940).

²⁰Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 158.

²¹Ibid., pp. 156-58.

²²Ibid., p. 160.

The message which Dr. Cunningham found was coherent and acceptable, but his keys were ambiguous. He could not give any rules for using these keys, and, although he stressed the need for using the First Folio, his method was so flexible that the same message could have been taken from a school edition of Shakespeare's Works.²³

Mrs. Bauer used Dr. Cunningham's method and made her findings known in a pamphlet which she called The Great Virginia Vault.²⁴ Her revelations about the lives of Shakespeare and Elizabeth I would do justice to the more sensational paperback novels of today. What these two "degenerates" represented disgusted Bacon and the group of authors who wrote the Works, Mrs. Bauer said, but she did not explain why the name "Shakespeare" was used as a mask by the authors. She believed that Shakespeare and Elizabeth were buried under a barn somewhere as an indication of what people of that time thought of them.²⁵

From the sonnets, Mrs. Bauer was able to decode an account of the voyages of Sir Francis Drake. She explored the poems and plays of Shakespeare and the poems of other

²³ Ibid., p. 162.

²⁴ Maria Bauer, The Great Virginia Vault (Los Angeles: privately published, 1939).

²⁵ Friedman and Friedman, op. cit., p. 163.

writers of more than a century after Shakespeare's death; she "discovered" that the Masonic group did not publish all of its works during the lifetime of the members. Many of these works were handed down to an inner Masonic group with instructions for publication. An examination of a poem by Charles Lamb revealed that it had been written by Bacon and Lancelot Andrewes; the poem also contained in code instructions for publication and an additional two lines, one of which named Lamb as the author through whom the poem was to be released.²⁶ This is an excellent example of the supernatural farsightedness attributed to the Masonic group.

In her work on poems felt by literary historians to have been written a hundred or more years after the deaths of Bacon and Shakespeare, Mrs. Bauer found the message that the original Shakespeare manuscripts had been taken to Jamestown, Virginia in 1635; in 1674, they had been moved to Williamsburg, Virginia, where they were buried under Bruton Parish Church (this is another example of the clairvoyancy of the Bacon-Masonic group). This idea sent Mrs. Bauer to Williamsburg, which was being restored by the Rockefeller Foundation. After securing the permission of the Foundation, she did some excavating, but found nothing. In a nearby churchyard, she deciphered a tombstone inscription,

²⁶ Ibid., p. 164.

and the resultant message told her where to find the manuscripts. However, the Rockefeller Foundation refused to have anything more to do with her, and Mrs. Bauer devoted much of her later writings to a recitation of her grievances against the Foundation.²⁷

Mrs. Bauer's "findings" refute her theory. Further refutation can be made through her cipher. She deviated from Dr. Cunningham's method (which had been refuted by the Friedmans) in that she believed strict adherence to the rules of the mechanical code and cipher could gain her nothing; she relied on a psychological key to break the code. Complete refutation can be made on the basis of this subjective method alone.²⁸

The preposterous Cunningham-Bauer group theory seems to have discouraged any further work by Disintegrationists, since there have not been any more group theories since 1940, when Dr. Cunningham's book was published.

II. OTHERS

In order to complete this study of the Shakespeare authorship controversy, it is necessary to present contenders whose claims never gained popular appeal, but who were

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 165-66.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 168.

proposed at one time or another as the author of the Works. The presentation of those who have been classified as "others" will be in the chronological order of their appearance.

Although the Baconian theories predominated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, other contenders made their appearances, only to be lost because of the great mass of Baconian literature.

The first of these contenders was Robert Burton, who was proposed in 1886 in a pamphlet entitled Who Wrote Shakespeare?²⁹ The author signed himself "Mulum in Parvo," but his real name was M. L. Hore. He was an American who spent twenty-five years trying to prove that Burton and Shakespeare were one and the same person, but his only convert was George Parker of the Bodleian Library.

Two years later, in 1888, an Englishman named F. Scott Surtees offered Anthony Shirley, an Elizabethan adventurer, as his candidate for the authorship.³⁰ Surtees demonstrated that Ignatius Donnelly's cipher theory³¹ actually supported the authorship of Shirley, since much of Donnelly's story fitted Shirley as well as Bacon.³²

²⁹Discussed in Ibid., p. 6. No bibliographical details available.

³⁰F. Scott Surtees, William Shakespeare. His Epitaph Unearthed and the Author of the Plays Run to the Ground (privately published, 1888).

³¹See Chapter III, p. 149 ff.

³²Friedman and Friedman, loc. cit.

Henry Wriothesley, the third Earl of Southampton, was proposed in 1905 by J. C. Nicol in The Real Shakespeare.

Nicol used a somewhat mysterious style in his revelation:

I, Fortinabras, otherwise Posthumous, quarried and on 7th December, 1905, plainly discovered Henry Wriotheslie, third Earl of Southampton, undoubtedly to be the sole author and begetter of the so-called poems and plays known as Shakespeare's Works . . . producing innumerable offspring in Art with other various names, notably . . . (Marlowe) . . . from the age of 13.³³

A partnership between Henry Wriothesley, the third Earl of Southampton, and Roger Manners, the fifth Earl of Rutland, was suggested in 1907 by Peter Alvor, a German, in Das neue Shakespeare Evangelium.³⁴ It might be well to note here that Alvor was a victim of indecision; he changed his mind and his contenders three times. In 1911, he proposed as a contender Anthony Bacon, the brother of Francis, in Anthony Bacon: Die Lossung des Shakespeare-Problems.³⁵ His third contender, Charles Blount, the Earl of Devonshire, was offered in 1930 in Eine neue Shakespeare-biographie.³⁶ Such changeableness is a refutation in itself.

The Great Unknown appeared as a contender in 1908. This rather mysterious title was given to his choice of author

³³C. F. Tucker Brooke, Shakespeare of Stratford (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 143.

³⁴Peter Alvor, Des neue Shakespeare Evangelium (Hannover: A Spoonholtz, 1907).

³⁵Peter Alvor, Anthony Bacon: Die Lossung des Shakespeare-Problems (Munchen and Leipzig: G. Muller, 1911).

³⁶Peter Alvor, Eine neue Shakespeare-biographie (Wurzburg: C. J. Becker, 1930).

by George Greenwood, a lawyer and member of Parliament, in The Shakespeare Problem Restated.³⁷ Greenwood later supported the Oxfordian movement and became the first president of its Shakespeare Fellowship, but at the time he first presented his theory, de Vere had not yet been suggested as a contender.

Greenwood's picture of the Great Unknown was similar to that painted by all anti-Shakespeareans; the author was of the nobility, had an excellent education, was a genius of the highest order, and was morally strong and good.

The Great Unknown theory was rather negative. Greenwood based it on the fact that he did not believe in Shakespeare as the author, nor did he believe in Bacon. He did not name an actual person as the author, and he did not deny that his Great Unknown had help from other literary men of the period. The entire book was negative in that it was more of a denial of the authorship of Shakespeare and Bacon than it was an espousal of any specific man as the author.

A refutation of Greenwood's theory was written in 1812 by Andrew Lang, a Scottish scholar and man of letters, who was interested in historical and literary intrigues. He had been interested in the Wolfian theory of Homer's authorship, and when that was settled, he turned his attention to

³⁷G. G. Greenwood, The Shakespeare Problem Restated (London: John Lane, 1908).

Greenwood's Great Unknown theory. He called his work Shakespeare, Bacon and the Great Unknown;³⁸ it was a point by point refutation of Greenwood's theory as well as a discussion and refutation of several of the Baconian theories. Lang's work did not discourage Greenwood; the Englishman later decided that his Great Unknown was de Vere, and he joined the camp of the Oxfordians.

It is enough to say of Greenwood's Great Unknown theory that it was a theory of conjecture and denial rather than one of actual fact and affirmative approach.

Belgium entered the controversy in 1912 when Professor Celestin Demblon, the Socialist Deputy from Liege, published a five hundred and fifty-nine page book which advocated the authorship of Roger Manners, the fifth Earl of Rutland. Professor Demblon's book bore the title Lord Rutland est Shakespeare.³⁹ Eight years later, J. Thomas Looney, in his support of de Vere as the author, declared that the Manners authorship theory was ridiculous since Manners was between sixteen and twenty-two years of age when the sonnets were

³⁸ Andrew Lang, Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown (London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1912).

³⁹ Celestin Demblon, Lord Rutland est Shakespeare. Le plus grand des mystères dévoilé (Paris: P. Ferdinando, 1912).

written (1592-1598) and that was far too young for the author of such beautiful work.⁴⁰

In 1914, an American, Henry Pemberton, Jr., nominated Sir Walter Raleigh for the authorship in his Shakespeare and Sir Walter Raleigh.⁴¹

Two years later, John M. Maxwell, an American from Indiana, suggested Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury and son of Elizabeth's great advisor, Burghly, as the author not only of the Shakespeare Works, but also of the works of many other Elizabethan writers in The Man Behind the Mask.⁴²

The scene of the controversy moved next to France. Professor Abel Lefranc, French scholar and Professor of French at the College de France, maintained that William Stanley, the sixth Earl of Derby, was the Shakespeare author in a two-volume work which he published in 1919. The title of his book was Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare": William Stanley Vie Comte de Derby.⁴³ Professor Lefranc

⁴⁰J. Thomas Looney, "Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere (new edition; New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1949), p. 377.

⁴¹Henry Pemberton, Jr., Shakespeare and Sir Walter Raleigh (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippicott Company, 1914).

⁴²John M. Maxwell, The Man Behind the Mask (Indianapolis: privately published, 1916).

⁴³Abel Lefranc, Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare": William Stanley Vie Comte de Derby (Paris: Payot and Company, 1919).

based his contention on the fact that William Stanley was known to have been writing plays in 1599. In his book, Studies in the Shakespeare Apocrypha, Baldwin Maxwell commented on this:

None of Derby's plays is extant, so far as is known, though certain eccentrics see him as the author of the plays which, for aristocratic reasons of his own, he arranged to be fathered by the ignorant actor William Shakespeare. But Derby maintained his own company of players from 1594 to 1618, and what plays he wrote were probably acted by them.⁴⁴

However, Lefranc maintained his belief, and twenty-six years later, in 1945, he wrote another book on the subject which he called A la Deconvertte de Shakespeare.⁴⁵

Continental Europe was by this time very much interested in the controversy, and Italy now offered its own contender, John Florio, who translated Montaigne's Essays.

Florio was proposed by Santi Paladino in a book published in Italy called Shakespeare, Pseudonym of an Italian Poet.⁴⁶

Signor Paladino was reading a book of poems written by a Michael Angelo (no relation to the sculptor) and was impressed by the fact that some of the phrases and maxims were familiar to him. He then realized that they were from Hamlet,

⁴⁴ Baldwin Maxwell, Studies in the Shakespeare Apocrypha (New York: The King's Crown Press, Columbia University, 1956), p. 10.

⁴⁵ Abel Lefranc, A la Deconvertte de Shakespeare (Paris: A. Mickel, 1945).

⁴⁶ No copy of this book was available, but it was discussed in Anonymous, "Shakespeare An Italian," Literary Digest, 104 (March 15, 1930), 24-25.

which had appeared six years after Michael Angelo's poems were published. Research showed Paladino that Michael Angelo had been a writer who had wandered around Europe after being persecuted during the Inquisition. Michael Angelo finally arrived in London in 1586, where he became the protege of Lord Pembroke. Paladino concluded that the real author was a man named John Florio, who had taught classical history at Athens and who had lived for a year at Denmark, where he unearthed the legend of Hamlet. Paladino tied Michael Angelo to Florio through the "Mr. W. H." of the dedication of the sonnets. "W. H." was William Herbert Pembroke; hence Florio was Pembroke's protege, Michael Angelo. After the death of Florio, Paladino said, Shakespeare ceased to write. The pseudonym Shakespeare was used because Florio was in fear of the Inquisition; he was living in the house of Shakespeare in London and chose his name for a mask.

Signor C. Camenisch of Naples, however, found that Florio died in London nine years after Shakespeare. It was also noted that Florio studied at Oxford and was a tutor in the royal family. He didn't use a pseudonym for his philosophic writings which are in the British Museum; included in these manuscripts was his 1603 translation of Montaigne's Essays.

The Florio theory had no support outside of Italy; it did not have enough substance to make it acceptable to non-Italian anti-Shakespeareans.

Scholars of English literature and teachers of English have been conspicuously absent from the controversy except in rare cases when they have defended the Shakespearean authorship. In 1937, however, Alden Brooks, who had been an instructor of English at both Harvard University and the United States Naval Academy, entered the controversy with a completely new contender. Professor Brooks' approach differed from that of other anti-Shakespeareans; he wrote two books on the subject and did not name his contender in the first one.

After considerable research, Professor Brooks presented a biography of "Will Shakspere" which he called Will Shakspeare, Factotum and Agent.⁴⁷ Published in 1937, this book described "Shakspere" as a shrewd business man, theatrical agent, and mask for the real author. Professor Brooks did not name this author, but promised a second book which would reveal the entire story as well as the true author of the Works.

The second book Will Shakspeare and the Dyer's Hand, appeared in 1943.⁴⁸ The author proposed by Professor Brooks was Sir Edward Dyer, poet and diplomat under Queen Elizabeth. Brooks listed fifty-four characteristics the author of the plays must have possessed, and then he put the impoverished

⁴⁷ Alden Brooks, Will Shakspeare, Factotum and Agent (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1937).

⁴⁸ Alden Brooks, Will Shakspeare and the Dyer's Hand (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943).

Dyer into this pattern. He was kinder to the man from Stratford than many other anti-Shakespeareans had been; he gave "Shakspere" a vital part in the production of the plays. "Shakspere" was the agent for the sale of the plays; he also added much of the humor. In short, he was the very important assistant to the author. Professor Brooks said of "Shakspere": "In final word it must be written of Will Shakspere that had not his activities occurred, the Shakespearean plays might well never have come into being."⁴⁹ The Shakespeareans might add a fervent "Amen" to this statement of Professor Brooks.

Will Shakspere and the Dyer's Hand was the subject of unfavorable comments by scholars and the press. The review by H. E. Woodbridge in the Springfield Republican of February 23, 1943 is not only an adequate summary of all of the reviews of this particular book, but also an adequate summary of criticism of the literature of the entire authorship problem:

Though it is entirely undocumented, the book shows a wider acquaintance with Elizabethan literature and scholarship than do most books of its kind. But it is like all the rest in two important respects. First, it reveals an almost complete insensitiveness to style and literary values; thus Mr. Brooks actually believes that Nashe was the creator of Falstaff and that Jonson was the creator of Antolycus--and, incidentally, that both these comic characters are designed as caricatures of "Will Shakspere"! Second, the book ignores or slurs over all

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 402.

the facts which do not fit into the writer's theory; for example, the fact that the author of the plays must have had an intimate knowledge of acting and the theater. The trifling requirement is not listed among the ⁵⁴ because it is obviously a test that Dyer cannot meet. The book is a monument of misdirected industry and ingenuity.⁵⁰

The latest anti-Shakespearean theory is also the most awe-inspiring. It appeared in 1956 in a book by Elliott Sweet entitled The Shake-speare Mystery, and it advocated the authorship of Elizabeth I.⁵¹ Sweet, a geophysicist and descendant of Sir Francis Drake, first became interested in the Shakespearean mystery while studying the life and times of his famous ancestor. During the course of his research, he developed the idea that Elizabeth I was the author. He reasoned that she had the knowledge necessary to be the author of the Works; she also had access to all of the plays being published at that time and it was her royal prerogative to take what she wanted of them (thus, the charge of plagiarism in the plays had a foundation).⁵²

Sweet examined the plays carefully and found a reason for all of them: the history plays were intended to induce loyalty and patriotism;⁵³ Timon of Athens, a play of savage

⁵⁰ H. E. Woodbridge, Book Review, Springfield Republican, February 23, 1943.

⁵¹ Elliott Sweet, The Shake-speare Mystery (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1956).

⁵² Ibid., p. 91. ⁵³ Ibid., p. 50.

bitterness, was written after Elizabeth learned of the marriage of her favorite, Leicester, to her cousin, Lettice;⁵⁴
King Henry VIII was Elizabeth's early life story.⁵⁵

Shakespeare's role in all of this was that of the mask. He was brought in from the provinces in order to prevent others from questioning his status as a playwright.⁵⁶ He never knew who the real author was, and he did not eulogize Elizabeth at the time of her death because he did not know how to write.

Sweet concluded his arguments in favor of Elizabeth's authorship by pointing to the Epilogue of King Henry VIII. He believed that the riddle of the Epilogue held the entire key to the controversy, and he went about solving it. His solution to this riddle was reached by examining the Epilogue line by line. He claimed that Elizabeth revealed her authorship of the plays; that she said that women would have sympathy with her hoax; that it would be a joke on the literary men of London, especially if a foreigner discovered it; that it would be a shock when the authorship was revealed and that some men would never believe it.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 87-88. ⁵⁵ Ibid., p. lll. ⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

⁵⁷ For a line by line discussion of the Epilogue riddle, see The Shake-speare Mystery, pp. lll-13.

Sweet's book is very interesting, but like so many anti-Shakespeareans, he had no actual proof to support his theory. The entire theory was based on conjecture and surmise; this makes it unacceptable by any standards of scholarship. Sweet is a scientist, but he did not follow the scientific method when he made this excursion outside his own field.

Although no new contenders and no new theories about old contenders have appeared in the last two years, one should not be lulled into believing that the controversy is dead. Undoubtedly, more books and articles will be written on the subject, but the controversy has reached a period of calm for the moment.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The first six chapters of this study have been devoted to a chronological survey of the controversy over the Shakespearean authorship, its background, and its probable causes. At this point, an effort will be made to summarize the findings of the study; to refute, in general, some of the important arguments of the anti-Shakespeareans; to indicate the conclusions drawn from this study; and to make recommendations from the observations of the author during the course of the study.

I. SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

From the standpoint of the mass of literature produced, the publicity attained, and/or the advocates gained, the three most important anti-Shakespearean movements were the Baconian, the Oxfordian, and the Marlovian. Of these three, the Baconian movement was the largest; it was the first, it has lasted the longest, and it has produced the most literature. The Oxfordian movement was second only to the Baconian; it had the most scholarly advocates and the least number of sensational and absurd theories. The Marlovian movement gained its place because of the wide newspaper coverage of the efforts of its chief advocate, Calvin Hoffman.

The Disintegrationist theories were persistently presented, but the champions of these theories were never able to agree about the composition of the group.

Many other single contenders were presented; such people as Stanley, Manners, Wriothesley, Raleigh, and Elizabeth I were nominated, but the theories which advocated their authorship did not gain the support or inspire the literature which the more prominent theories had.

Throughout the controversy, there has been a recognizable pattern in each major movement. Once the movement had begun, it built up to a climax with a great mass of literature and then gradually diminished.

Certain names have recurred over and over again in the controversy. Marlowe, Bacon, de Vere, Stanley, Manners, Wriothesley, Mary Sidney, and Raleigh were either proposed as contenders or as members of one of the groups, or they were in some way placed in association with one or the other of the contenders.

This study has shown that none of the anti-Shakespeareans adequately proved their theories because they could not produce any concrete evidence. Many of the theories were so ridiculous in methods and claims that they refuted themselves.

It is difficult to determine the present status of any of the theories presented in this study. Some of them appear to have died a natural death; others are dormant, but may be reactivated at any time.

II. GENERAL REFUTATIONS

As each theory was presented in this study, an attempt was made to give a specific refutation wherever it was necessary and whenever it was possible. It would be well here to offer general refutations of the anti-Shakespearean theories as a whole.

The first point to be considered will be the question of the Shakespeare signatures. Most of the anti-Shakespeareans have pointed up the fact that Shakespeare did not know how to spell his own name. He used the variations "Shaksp," "Shakape," "Shakspere," and "Shakspeare;" he used "Shakspere" on two pages of his will and "Shakspeare" on the third.¹ The debunkers of the Stratford man did not go beyond Shakespeare to discover that laxity of spelling in those days was the rule rather than the exception. For example, Burghly spelled his title and his name (Cecil) half a dozen different ways, and Raleigh had at least forty different spellings of his name.² Therefore variations in spelling would not necessarily point to a lack of education or intelligence.

While the subject of education is under discussion, it might be well to say something about the use of Shakespeare

¹ F. E. Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1952), p. 597.

² John Fiske, "Forty Years of Bacon-Shakespeare Folly," A Century of Science and Other Essays (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899), p. 376.

as a mask. If, as the anti-Shakespeareans claim, Shakespeare was an ignorant country man who could not have written his name, much less the Works, then the real author did not show much subtlety or imagination when he chose the man from Stratford as his mask.³ Surely the real author must have realized that his hoax would quickly be discovered.

The anti-Shakespeareans (especially the Baconians) were quick to point out that Shakespeare showed too much knowledge of the law for a man from the country. It seems needless to point out that he was involved in several legal suits, a fact which is supported by documents.⁴ The anti-Shakespeareans have also failed to note that the Elizabethan period was a period of great interest in law. People attended courts of law much as they attended plays.⁵ It might also be noted that Shakespeare's father was a Justice of the Peace in Stratford;⁶ Shakespeare would most certainly have been exposed to some of the legal actions over which his father presided.

One of the stock arguments of the anti-Stratfordians is that Shakespeare would not have had access to the courts

³ Bergen Evans, "Good Friend for Jesus Sake Forbear: Was Shakespeare Really Shakespeare?" The Saturday Review of Literature, 32 (May 7, 1949), 7-8.

⁴ See Benjamin Roland Lewis, The Shakespeare Documents (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1940).

⁵ William F. Friedman and Elizabeth S. Friedman, The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), p. 12.

⁶ Ibid.

of the nobility where the conversation was witty and full of puns, yet the plays are full of just such dialogue. The anti-Shakespeareans were undoubtedly assuming that Shakespeare kept himself locked up in seclusion, because such conversation was available in novels, in plays on the stage (particularly in Lyly's plays), and in poems. Unless he were a hermit, Shakespeare would probably have seen and read much about the life of the nobility and would have tried to improve upon what he saw and heard.⁷ In Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown, Andrew Lang refuted the anti-Stratfordian stand very well when he said:

People did not commonly talk in the poetical way, heaven knows; people did not write in the poetic convention . . . A man of genius naturally made his ladies and courtiers more witty, more "conceited," more eloquent, more gracious than any human beings ever were anywhere in daily life.

It seems scarcely credible that one should be obliged to urge facts so obvious against the Baconian argument that only a Bacon, intimately familiar with the society of the great, could make the great speak as, in the plays they do--and as in real life they probably did not!⁸

One of the main assumptions of the anti-Shakespeareans has been either that no one was aware of the authorship hoax except Shakespeare and the real author, or that there was a blanket of silence on the part of those who participated.

⁷ Andrew Lang, Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown (London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1912), p. 121.

⁸ Ibid., p. 122.

This problem has been discussed elsewhere in the study, but it is an issue that is too important to ignore at this time. It seems impossible that so great a deception could have escaped the notice of theater people, and nowhere in contemporary writings was there a hint that anyone even suspected that Shakespeare was not the author of the Works. On the other hand, contemporary allusions to the man of Stratford demonstrate that he was thought of as the author. Jonson, Heywood, Heminge, and Condell are but a few of those who referred to his authorship.⁹

If the people who worked with Shakespeare did not suspect such a hoax as the anti-Shakespeareans claim was the case, then he could not have been the uneducated lout they have always described; if he had the intelligence necessary to keep up the hoax, was it not possible that he also had the intelligence to write the plays? In his little book, Sergeant Shakespeare, Duff Cooper pointed to the crux of this whole argument and at the same time refuted this line of reasoning when he said, "But it has always seemed to me most necessary, before showing that somebody else wrote Shakespeare's Works, to prove that he did not write them himself. This nobody has ever done."¹⁰

⁹ Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁰ Duff Cooper, Sergeant Shakespeare (New York: Viking Press, 1949), p. 15.

Almost every anti-Shakespearean theory has utilized the argument that Stratford-on-Avon did not recognize Shakespeare as a playwright; if his own home-town did not see him as a great author, he could not have been one. Concerning this question, J. M. Robertson said in The Baconian Heresy; A Confutation:

On the other hand, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the average inhabitants of Stratford did or could appreciate the plays as literature, all questions of authorship apart. If for most of them Shakespeare was not a celebrity, it was because, first, many could not read; and secondly, because they tended to be puritanical, and did not dream that stage plays could be great or serious matter. Many of them, in fact, would regard everything connected with "the harlotry players" as savouring of sin."¹¹

The idea that Stratford did not celebrate Shakespeare's greatness can be turned on the anti-Shakespeareans. If Will were the mask for another person and if Stratford were as quick to give recognition to authors as the anti-Shakespearean argument implies, Shakespeare could not have been very successful as a mask, for he did not inspire Stratford to treat him as a celebrity. This merely points up Robertson's statement: Stratford did not consider plays to be great works of literature. In all probability, Shakespeare did not consider the plays to be great either. They made money for him, and that was enough.

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J. M. Robertson, The Baconian Heresy; A Confutation (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1913), p. 28.

It can be said of the anti-Shakespeareans that if an unauthenticated tradition about Shakespeare fitted their theories, they used it; if it did not fit, they mentioned it as unauthenticated and discarded it.

It is interesting to note that the anti-Shakespearean theories often canceled each other. The advocates of a certain theory not only had to prove that their contender was the author of the plays, but also that none of the other contenders were responsible. Perhaps by watchful waiting, the Shakespearean scholar will not need to act in favor of the Stratford man; he needs only to wait for the anti-Shakespeareans to do such a thorough job of negating each others' theories that Shakespeare will be the only contender left.

At the present time, as well as (throughout) the controversy, the most important weapon of the Shakespeareans has been silence. Very few of them have written books on the controversy; if it is mentioned in works of literary history or criticism, it is given so little space that it might as well not be mentioned at all. By the very fact that they overlook the authorship question, scholars give the controversy the aspect of a passing fad.

There is, however, something good to be said for the controversy as a whole: it has led people to read more of the works of such writers as Bacon and Marlowe; it has caused research which has led to the discovery of some of the

writings of de Vere and other contenders; and it has aroused the interest of many in the lines and backgrounds of all of the contenders.

A fitting conclusion to these general refutations is to be found in George Sampson's The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature:

But two great unassailable facts we do know and must never forget: first, that a man named William Shakespeare lived and wrote, was seen by many, was admired for his works, and was liked for his qualities; second, that a great mass of work was known by friends and rivals to be his, was published as his by people who had been, so to speak, in the making of it, and was never doubted to be his by any contemporary, or by any successor, till America in the nineteenth century began to throw up a succession of cranks representing the extremes of ignorant credulity and morbid ingenuity.¹²

III. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THIS STUDY

It was not the purpose of this study to determine whether or not Shakespeare was the author of the Works which bear his name; this was a historical examination of the authorship problem. However, certain conclusions can be drawn from this survey.

First, it has never been proven by documented facts that any of the suggested contenders for the authorship wrote the Works.

¹²George Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 256.

Second, it has never been proven by documented facts that Shakespeare was not the author of the Works.

Third, the absurd contentions of many of the anti-Shakespearean advocates have tended to turn away serious consideration and research by responsible scholars in the field of English literature.

The author of this study firmly believes Shakespeare was the author of the Works and will remain so convinced until such time as documentary proof to the contrary is presented.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

During the course of this study, the author has worked in a variety of public libraries, all of which were used by students on the secondary and collegiate levels. In these libraries, the shelves which contained the works of and about Shakespeare also contained the works pertaining to the controversy. No attempt was made to identify these latter books. The titles of many of them are very misleading; for example, The Man Who Was Shakespeare, The Shake-speare Mystery, Will Shakspere and the Dyer's Hand, and This Star of England: William Shake-speare Man of the Renaissance. are all books which advocate anti-Shakespearean theories, but any one of them might be mistaken for a book about Shakespeare. Students who have no idea that there is a controversy take these books in the course of everyday library

assignments under the misapprehension that they have found a biography or criticism of Shakespeare. In some cases, confusion is probably the result; in others, students may take the anti-Shakespearean theories as fact. The author overheard a conversation in the local library in which one secondary student, looking for Shakespeare material, remarked to another that she had read a book which said, "Somebody named de Vere or Oxford or something" was the real author. She further remarked that, "Somebody had better set the teacher straight." Unfortunately, the teacher is often not aware of the controversy or its extent.

It might also be noted that this study was undertaken because the author, unaware of the controversy, blundered upon one of the theories and accepted it as plausible. Further research led to the study.

Such observations have led to the following recommendations:

1. Secondary schools, colleges, and universities should spend some time on a discussion of the controversy in courses in English literature; the author recommends one complete lecture in courses in Shakespeare and at least a part of a lecture in all courses in English literature on the collegiate level; enough time should be spent on the secondary level to acquaint students with the fact that there is a controversy.
2. Libraries, if possible, should in some way identify the literature of the controversy in order to prevent confusion.
3. More responsible scholars should publish research on the Shakespearean side of the question to balance the literature and should give the interested student some place to turn for guidance.

If such recommendations were followed, they might prevent confusion and misunderstanding in a field where confusion and misunderstanding are the outstanding attributes of the participants.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CONTENDERS FOR THE AUTHORSHIP OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

The contenders for the authorship of Shakespeare's Works have been discussed at length in this study. A list of them is made at this time so that the reader may see at a glance who they were and just how contemporary they were with Shakespeare (1564-1616).

The contenders in the list below are there for any one, or all, of three reasons: (1) they occupied a place of great importance in the field of the controversy; (2) their names have appeared in many of the Disintegrationist theories; and/or (3) their claims, from the standpoint of time, indicate the absurdity that was often reached in the controversy.¹

1. Thomas More (1478-1535)
2. Elizabeth I (1533-1603)
3. Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset and Lord Buckhurst
(1536-1608)
4. Sir Edward Dyer (1540-1607)
5. Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford (1550-1604)
6. Sir Walter Raleigh (c. 1552-1618)
7. Giovanni (John) Florio (c. 1553-1625)

¹Other contenders who are not included in this list appeared in the various group theories, but they were usually named only once; therefore, their claims to authorship were very minor.

8. William Stanley, the sixth Earl of Derby (c. 1561-1642)
9. Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke (c. 1561-1624)
10. Sir Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans
(1561-1626)
11. Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)
12. Robert Cecil, the Earl of Salisbury (c. 1565-1612)
13. Henry Wriothesley, the third Earl of Southampton (1573-
1624)
14. Roger Manners, the fifth Earl of Rutland (1576-1612)
15. Robert Burton (1577-1640)
16. Daniel Defoe (1659-1731)

APPENDIX B

DELIA BACON

One of the most interesting and at the same time one of the most pathetic aspects of the Shakespearean authorship controversy is the life story of Delia Bacon.¹ In her efforts to prove not only that her theories about the authorship were correct but also that she was the first to advance anti-Shakespearean ideas, she appeared as a lost, frightened person, dreamy, imaginative, romantic, and unable to cope with the world in which she found herself.

Delia Bacon was born in 1811 in a log cabin in Ohio during one of her father's fruitless attempts to improve his lot by going west. Her roots, however, were in Connecticut and New England, and she eventually returned there to teach school.² She taught a course in Shakespeare, and she became obsessed with the idea that this common, uneducated man could not have been the author of the beautiful works attributed to him; she even taught this to her students.

At some time during the period when she was teaching, Miss Bacon became deeply involved with a young man. When he

¹See Chapter III, p. 44.

²Esther Claudman Dunn, Shakespeare in America (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), p. 296.

left her after breaking all of his romantic promises, she was deeply disturbed and became eccentric and withdrawn.³

Miss Bacon's views about Shakespeare became known around New England, and when she went to England in an attempt to prove her theory, she had the backing of the best intellectuals of her time. She was financed by Samuel Butler, and Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote Thomas Carlyle, asking him to aid her in any way he could. Putnam's Monthly contracted for articles about her theory,⁴ and the Boston publishers, Philips, Sampson and Company gave her an advance on a book and consulted with Emerson about it, treating him as her unofficial agent.⁵

In England, Miss Bacon met Nathaniel Hawthorne, who was then the American Consul at Liverpool. He had known her when she had been a teacher, and when he found her in need of help, he befriended her. Many other literary people became interested in her because of the romantic idea behind her project. Carlyle tried to help her long after he was convinced that her theory was worthless and that she was mentally unbalanced.⁶

³ Ignatius Donnelly, The Great Cryptogram (Chicago: R. S. Peale and Company, 1887), pp. 901-03.

⁴ Although the reception of her articles was so poor and Miss Bacon attracted so little favorable attention in America, her remaining articles were cancelled.

⁵ Donnelly, op. cit., p. 297.

⁶ Ibid.

Miss Bacon believed that there was some evidence of the Shakespeare hoax at his grave. The verse over the grave convinced her that Shakespeare had died with some guilty secret. She once hid near the grave with the intention of opening it, but she was frightened and never got up the courage to carry out her plan.⁷ This fear and lack of courage stopped Miss Bacon from ever discovering anything concrete, but she continued in her belief that Shakespeare was not the author everyone believed him to have been.

In 1856, Putnam's Monthly published an article by her entitled "William Shakespeare and His Plays: An Inquiry Concerning Them."⁸ That same year, William Henry Smith of England published his letter to Lord Ellesmere entitled "Was Lord Bacon the Author of Shakespeare's Plays?"⁹ The following year, 1857, both Miss Bacon and Smith expanded their ideas into books. Miss Bacon's was entitled The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded, and had a preface by Nathaniel Hawthorne (who did not endorse her beliefs but sought to give her moral support by writing the preface);¹⁰ Smith called his

⁷ Alfred van Rensselaer Westfall, American Shakespearean Criticism (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1939), p. 291

⁸ See Chapter III, p. 44.

⁹ See Chapter III, p. 45.

¹⁰ See Chapter III, p. 46.

book Bacon and Shakespeare: An Inquiry Touching Players, Playhouses, and Playwriters in the Days of Elizabeth.¹¹

There was now a controversy within the controversy: who had been the first to bring up the authorship question?¹² Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote an introduction to the second edition of Miss Bacon's book in which he charged Smith with plagiarism.¹³ In the second edition of his book, Smith replied to Hawthorne's charge; he stated that he had believed in Bacon's authorship for over twenty years and that he had never heard of Miss Bacon until he saw her name in a review of his book.¹⁴ The argument went back and forth between the two camps. Unfortunately, the year after her book was published, Miss Bacon's mind failed, and she was sent to an asylum where she died in 1859.¹⁵

This controversy over who was the first to bring the authorship controversy before the public is not dead yet. There is a sharp dividing line between those who favor Delia

¹¹ See Chapter III, p. 45.

¹² Although neither Miss Bacon or Mrs. Smith were aware of it, there were several others before them who had, in isolated cases, brought up the question. See Chapter II, pp. 33-39.

¹³ Westfall, op. cit., p. 290.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ The fact of Miss Bacon's insanity makes her an unfortunate choice, by the Baconians as one of the founders of their movement, but this has never deterred them.

Bacon and those who support Smith. One thing which can be said in favor of Smith is that he actually proposed Bacon as the author; Miss Bacon took the view that Shakespeare could not have been the author, and eventually she proposed a group with Bacon as the leader. Ignatius Donnelly, in an effort to bring peace into the Baconian camp, discussed the differences between the two. He tried to show that they were on the same side, that only their approach was different. He said:

There is no resemblance in the mode of thought between Miss Bacon's argument and that of Mr. Smith. Miss Bacon dealt in the large, general, comprehensive propositions involved in the question; Mr. Smith's essay is sharp, keen and bristling with points. Both show wonderful penetration, but it is of a different kind. Miss Bacon's is the penetration of a philosopher; Mr. Smith's that of a lawyer.¹⁶

Delia Bacon failed to prove what she believed, but she succeeded in giving birth to a movement which is still active today. Nearly insane, frightened, lost, and romantic, she clung to the belief that the Shakespeare Works were too great to have been written by an uneducated man from the country. Esther Cloudman Dunn summed up very adequately the basis upon which the Baconian movement rests when she said, "The whole story of Delia Bacon's effort is a pathetic distortion of . . . (the) . . . idolatry of Shakespeare."¹⁷

¹⁶Donnelly, op. cit., p. 917.

¹⁷Dunn, loc. cit.

APPENDIX C

SHAKESPEARE WROTE BACON

Chapter III of this study was concerned with the theories that Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare Works. This appendix, however, is concerned with a theory that advocated Shakespeare as the author of the Bacon works. The Shakespeare theory, a satire on the Baconian theories, was advanced in a magazine article by Sir Leslie Stephen in 1901 at the height of the Baconian movement.¹ This essay was later included by S. O. A. Ullman in a collection of Sir Leslie's essays entitled Men, Books, and Mountains.²

Sir Leslie Stephen was an English man of letters, a philosopher, mountain climber, biographer, and literary editor. His family was literary by tradition; his first wife was the daughter of Thackeray, and he was the father of Virginia Woolf by his second wife. His subject matter was usually of a serious nature, but in this one essay he turned to the field of satire.

According to Sir Leslie, Francis Bacon was very active politically and wanted to do something that would make a good

¹Sir Leslie Stephen, "Did Shakespeare Write Bacon?" Living Age, 231 (December 21, 1901), 777-780.

²Sir Leslie Stephen, "Did Shakespeare Write Bacon?" Men, Books, and Mountains, S. O. A. Ullman, editor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 74-80.

impression. He had made an outline of a philosophical reform, but he had no time to work on it. It has since been proven that he was not above underhanded intrigue, and he employed it in this case. He went to the Earl of Southampton, who would have been his enemy because of his part in the Southampton-Essex trouble.³ Bacon made peace with Southampton because he was aware that the Earl was in touch with authors who could help him. There has long been a tradition that Southampton gave Shakespeare one thousand pounds for a purchase of some kind.⁴ Sir Leslie suggested that this money actually came from Bacon, but had to be concealed as such. The result of this bargaining was The Advancement of Learning (1605). Shakespeare put an anagram in this work to identify it as his own. The anagram contained an unnecessary word or two, and the meaning was veiled, but it was as good an anagram as the Baconians had ever found. The work got to the printers before Bacon discovered it, and since he couldn't say anything publicly, he had to wait to get his revenge. He avenged himself in the First Folio by inserting the same type of veiled cryptogram which claimed for him the authorship of the plays.

³The year Bacon was appointed Solicitor-General he launched an attack which resulted not only in the execution of Essex but also the imprisonment of Southampton.

⁴F. E. Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1952), p. 613.

Sir Leslie went on to show why Shakespeare ceased writing when he retired in 1611 or 1612. This cessation of literary activity has long been a puzzle to scholars. Sir Leslie said Bacon paid Shakespeare to go to the country where he would not be tempted to write plays, drink at the Mermaid Tavern, or talk too much. At that time, Shakespeare was writing Novum Organum and Bacon did not want to take any chances. Bacon had no time to do all of this writing because of his political and legal activities. He probably made notes and gathered observations to give to Shakespeare. Unfortunately for Bacon, Shakespeare died in 1616, leaving Novum Organum as a fragment. Bacon put the papers together, had them translated into Latin to guard against anagrams, added a few notes for a conclusion, and had the work published in 1620.

Sir Leslie said that internal evidence supported his theory. The Novum Organum showed the author to have been ignorant of what was going on in his own day. This would have been natural in Stratford but not in London, where Bacon could have been kept abreast of all developments, scientific and philosophical. Sir Leslie also pointed out that Novum Organum was the work of a poet; the formulae are given in concrete maxims and are represented by concrete emblems. Bacon was not a poet, a fact that was evident in his version of the Psalms, but Shakespeare most certainly was a poet.

Sir Leslie concluded his argument by stating that after Bacon was convicted of bribery, he had nothing to take up his time, so he wrote. What he wrote in these later years contributed almost nothing to what Shakespeare had written for him.⁵

If the reader will turn to Chapter III, he will discover many parallels of this theory; the only difference is that Sir Leslie proposed Shakespeare as the author where the Baconians proposed Bacon. The import of such a comparison lies in the fact that Sir Leslie did not mean one word of what he said, while the Baconians were completely serious.

⁵Sir Leslie Stephen, "Did Shakespeare Write Bacon?" Men, Books, and Mountains, S. O. A. Ullman, editor (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 74-80.

APPENDIX D

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL WROTE THE WORKS OF GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

The methods employed by the anti-Shakespeareans to "prove" the authorship of their contenders have occasionally been the subject of ridicule by those who favor the authorship of William Shakespeare.

In the autumn and winter of 1948 in the "Letters to the Editor" columns of several issues of The Saturday Review of Literature there appeared many, many letters about the authorship of de Vere.¹ After several weeks of argument for and against de Vere as the author, a man named Clark Kinnaird became disgusted with the methods advocated by the Oxfordians. In the November 6, 1948 issue of The Saturday Review of Literature, he wrote a bitingly sarcastic letter on the subject.² In this letter, he stated that George Bernard Shaw was not the author of the plays attributed to him; the real author, like de Vere, was a noble who could not allow the plays to be published under his name. Using the same loose reasoning and methods employed by the Oxfordians and other anti-Shakespeareans, Kinnaird utilized the titles of the Shaw plays to "prove" who their real author was.³

¹ See Chapter IV, p. 128.

² Clark Kinnaird, "Letters to the Editor," The Saturday Review of Literature, 32 (November 6, 1948), 21.

³ The titles of the plays are not in chronological or alphabetical order or in any other recognizable order.

WIDOWER'S HOUSES

SAINT JOAN

MAN AND SUPERMAN

ARMS AND THE MAN

THE PHILANDERER

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

ANDROCLES AND THE LION

MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION

PYGMALION

OVER RULED

ON THE ROCKS

BACK TO METHUSELAH

GETTING MARRIED

GREAT CATHERINE

THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

HEARTBREAK HOUSE

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

MAJOR BARBARA

CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA

THE MAN OF DESTINY

CANDIDA

MISALLIANCE

JOHN BULL'S OTHER ISLAND

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