

But why still “Shakespeare” even after Oxford’s lifetime?

Regarding the politics: many of the government-policy-promotional aspects of Oxford’s plays and other works remained applicable after accession of the new monarch King James I in 1603. Therefore Oxford’s identity as creator of the works had to remain a secret even after his death in 1604.

The personalities reinforced this. Certain influential family members of courtiers whom Oxford had embarrassed gained official publishing control over his plays and other works under the new royal regime. Evidently they admired the works and considered them highly promising to finance as a print run, but also they were fiercely determined to protect permanently the reputations of their loved ones and others whom Oxford’s quill pen had not flattered. This they sought to accomplish by “decontextualization” – i.e. by ensuring as best they could that for all time, it would never be known that the creator of the works had been someone, a member of the nobility – Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford – from inside Queen Elizabeth’s court itself.

Their intention was that for posterity the author must always appear to have been a harmless outsider, an ordinary citizen – William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon!

Therefore these family members avidly preserved and reaffirmed the authorship myth, and required everyone involved in the project to toe this line as well, right up through publication of the “Shakespeare” First Folio in 1623.