

Why did Oxford write as “Shakespeare”?

1. Convention

During the Elizabethan period it was taboo for nobles like Oxford to write plays and poetry, etc., under their own names.

2. Political

To a significant degree, Oxford worked in concert with Queen Elizabeth and her top ministers, providing them with help crucial for their governing of the fractious realm. Many of his plays served as political allegories of current events fostering points of view highly favorable to the regime, and they promoted English patriotism amongst theater audiences throughout England via traveling troupes.

This required that the works had to appear to be purely entertainment, with (either anonymous authorship or) the playwright not being known to be someone inside the royal court itself and personally close to Queen Elizabeth, so as not to blow the cover on policy-driven objectives the works were helping to promote.

3. Personalities

Edward de Vere was mercurial in nature...brilliant...quick to take offense in interactions with his peers...dazzling in his dancing and jousting skills...scandal-prone...tempestuously prominent in the court of Queen Elizabeth where, for much of the time, he was one of her very most favorites.

With a lifelong penchant for combativeness, over the years Oxford acquired certain archrivals, whom he lampooned in some of his plays first performed at royal gatherings. Skillfully...devilishly...mercilessly...he made his adversaries villains, or laughingstocks, in front of everyone, including the queen who, we believe, enjoyed it all very much. She not only permitted this but evidently, often encouraged it as delectable dramatic “spice” – one commentator has written that she “feasted upon stinging portrayals of members of her court”.*

But this could only work as “inside jokes”. The writings had to (be anonymous or) appear to be by someone outside the royal court.

Why?

Because disclosure of the playwright as being someone inside the court would have tipped off gossipy outsiders to put 2+2 together to figure out who he was making fun of, which might have exposed powerful courtiers to derision far and wide!

Therefore the price Oxford had to pay for subjecting some of his colleagues to crafty ridicule – even though he had Elizabeth’s enthusiastic approval to do this – was that his identity as author had to vanish in favor of “frontman” William Shakspere (last name as spelled on documents during his lifetime, different from “Shakespeare”) of Stratford-upon-Avon, a businessman and sometime theater investor and actor but who, so far as we know, never set foot in the royal court.

*Hank Whittemore, *100 Reasons Shake-speare was the Earl of Oxford*, 2016, page 9.