

THE FRIEDMANS vs. WILLIAM MOORE A judgement from the Court of Appeal

A mass of cryptographic evidence of variable quality emerged in the nineteenth century to support the case for Bacon's authorship of the works of Shakespeare. Many an instance looked more like a PhD thesis in applied mathematics than a work of literary criticism; and, as a consequence, the average *littérateur* has failed to engage with it, coming to rely instead on the judgement of the rare bird who may have. Here for example is John Michell, in his acclaimed *Who Wrote Shakespeare?* (Thames and Hudson, 1996):

The reason why it is possible to say with confidence that no-one has found convincing evidence of a code, cipher or cryptic writing in any Shakespeare text, is that the whole subject has been thoroughly investigated by two people who were ideally qualified to do so. *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined* by William and Elizabeth Friedman, published in 1957, is almost unique in the Authorship literature. It sheds clear light on one aspect of a subject in which hardly anything else has been finally decided.

This is in truth not so. Their case would have no chance of success in a Court of Appeal, where His and Her Honours would be found to have failed to consider by far the most powerful piece of evidence in favour of the accused. William Moore, in his *"Shakespeare"* (1934), - written long after the dust of the first skirmishes had settled, - produced rigorous and compelling evidence that the plethora of nonsense lines in *Love's Labour's Lost* - such as 'Armathor ath to the side, O a most dainty man' - secrete in every case a hidden message along the lines of "William Shakespeare is Francis Bacon incognito". Now, it is a fundamental thesis of my *UDGCB* that Bacon was not the sole author of the plays. There has always been something fatally wrong with the Baconist position, to do with the unlikelihood of a mind like Bacon's, which represented a triumph of the intellect, conceiving the greatest tragedies in the Western tradition. Arthur Schopenhauer isolated the "x" factor - finally, the will-to-life, or libido in its broadest sense - as a constant and *sine qua non* of the great work of art. Bacon certainly had eliminated the "x" factor entirely as a problem in his own life.

So, whence the impulse toward tragedy, and the author's deep personal acquaintance with it as conveyed in the plays? I show in *UDGCB* that the Baconian soil, deficient in some key nutrients, and perhaps overall rather sterile in regard to the Tragic Muse, was fertilised by an injection of the depth and horrific authenticity of Shakespeare's own experience of tragedy, in the catastrophic breakdown which had befallen him in 1587, after some eight years enthrallment by the Puritan world-view. The First Folio undoubtedly was Bacon's 'baby', testament to the greatest genius in the Western tradition, the catalyst for the creation of which was Shakespeare's intimate revelations to his mentor and healer, and to which Shakespeare himself made a significant, irreplaceable contribution, in the intimate revelations of his own case history (for example, the Gads Hill robbery scene in *IHIV*, which records an act of adolescent auto-erotism, and which could only have proceeded from the pen of Shakespeare himself: no other conclusion is possible).

Not only Shakespeare, of course, but Marlowe (*I-3HVI*), perhaps Fletcher, and others, contributed to FF, as scholars have long recognised; yet Bacon was its genius and grand strategist, as *UDGCB* exhaustively shows: and this is the sense of the affirmations of his authorship in the nonsense lines in *LLL*.

The Friedmans, distinguished career cryptanalysts who were co-opted into working on the Shakespearean ciphers question, do indeed briefly tackle the work of William Moore:

We have chosen to consider him because he is the only anti-Stratfordian to rely for his proof on a combination of the substitution and transposition methods in cryptography.

Again, this is not so. The examples of the substitution/transposition method in *LLL* are considered, in fact, within the first 90 pages or so of a 324 page book, the remainder being concerned with methods of far higher specificity, the most of important of which depends on the mathematically-based determinations and assignments of seal values of letters and words, according to the Elizabethan alphabet. "*Shakespeare*" brings to light some truly spectacular examples of cryptography in *LLL*. However it begins, quite reasonably, with analyses of the simpler ciphers, including those based on the substitution/transposition method, - for which Moore is mocked by the Friedmans, in a tone of archness and contempt, which argues against its reliability as a scientific document. A longer version of their book apparently resides in the Folger library; however, if they had in fact engaged with that (longer) part of Moore's work on which his proof rests, it is inconceivable - presuming them to be not wholly devoid of integrity - that they could have judged it worthy of omission from the final volume. It appears to be a case of simple negligence: they read the first chapters, and decided that was enough.

Even their case against the transposition (anagram) method is flawed. It certainly is inexact, the letters of a given string (to use the computing term), generally being susceptible to being arranged in more than one way. The Friedmans examine the infamous line '*Bome boon for boon prescian, a little scratch, 'twil serve*'. Moore finds in it, using the substitution/transposition method, a hidden statement affirming the authorship of Bacon. The problem is, as the Friedmans point out, that this is not the only way in which the letters of the anagram stage can be arranged. Yet what is certainly not true is that the decipherer can arrange the letters in any way he chooses, as they argue. For there is, in truth, always a finite limit to the ways a given string can be re-arranged; and, further, a far lower limit to the ways they can be re-arranged *to make sense*. So that it becomes a matter of probability, on which scientific proof often depends.

Let us consider an experiment examining, say, the carcinogenic effect of an aniline dye found in hair products. We take ten chickens and expose them to the dye, and find that five contract a cancer. The Friedmans would make the point that this is not a proof, and they would be right; and this is the sort of fallacy they impute to the work of Moore. We then take a further ten chickens, genetically identical to the first group, and, under the same conditions, do not feed them the dye. We find that only two contract the cancer; but does this constitute a proof? What is required here is that we do a statistical analysis to determine, on the basis of probability, whether the difference is significant, or due to chance. In this case, the probability that this is a chance variation would be high. We then take a hundred chickens in each group, and find that the ratio is 50:8. This is clearly far more likely to be a significant difference, and may well constitute a proof.

This question of probability is at the heart of Moore's proof. Let us suppose, for example, that we are given a string of one thousand letters in which we suspect the names of animals are hidden in the ten-letter sub-strings. We examine all the possible sub-strings of consecutive ten letters and find that, say,

one in three of them encrypt the name of an animal, along with a small number of other random English words. We then take a random one thousand letter string, perform the same analysis, and find that the incidence is one in a hundred. This is clearly highly likely to be statistically significant, and our suspicion would seem to have been well founded. Suppose, however, that the relevant ten-letter sub-strings had been highlighted in italics: then the incidence would be 100%, and the statistical significance would be far higher.

This is a reasonable analogy to *LLL*, where the encryptions are highlighted in the nonsense lines, which stand out like the proverbial, and demand to be examined. It is a schoolboy's trap to suppose that the great artists knowingly wrote palpable nonsense. Others have explained them away as being due to composers' errors. However, I show in *UDGCB* the extreme accuracy of information transmission in passages, lines, words, even single letters, in FF. The compositor, convenient whipping-boy of the critics, emerges from *UDGCB* as a real hero. Further, Moore impressively shows the often immense cryptographic significance of minute differences in the Quarto and FF versions, to indicate Bacon's continued labour over time to improve the quality of the encryptions in *LLL*, which he conceived to add his signature to FF.

Even if all the relevant lines in *LLL* were found to be instances of the anagram method alone, each and all of them encrypting a hidden statement affirming the authorship of Bacon, then, by the laws of probability, this would be highly likely to be statistically significant. However, there are far more powerful techniques at work therein, some instances of which would seem to be enough to constitute a proof of themselves. What is needed, to silence the doubters once and for all, is a thorough statistical analysis: a job of nightmarish complexity, it would seem, yet certainly feasible in the digital age. Hard figures: I like to think that the Friedmans would have respected them.

There remains the case of Ignatius Donnelly, a part at least of whose monumental *The Great Cryptogram* I plan to audit in the months to come. I suspect he may emerge looking somewhat better than from the broad-brush paint-out of *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined*, the Friedmans' negligence vis-à-vis Moore giving little hope for a form reversal in his case. We shall see. He was a great man: a nineteenth century Irish-American, philosopher, scholar, author, humanitarian, US Senator, and much else besides. He reminds one, in the depth and range of his scholarship, and general temper, of none so much as Oliver St. John Gogarty. His work on Atlantis, object of facile derision by the Friedmans, anticipated the really solid research of recent years, most notably by Graham Hancock in his acclaimed *Underworld* (see www.grahamhancock.com), which must put paid to any notion that the history of this earth may not have been marked by periodic catastrophes, in which whole civilisations have disappeared beneath the waves of the sea.

One of the many collateral victories of my work may be the rehabilitation of the memory of Delia Bacon, the first great pioneer of the anti-Stratford movement. She was sane when she began her work, and crazy when she finished: a declension to which the brutal actions of her New England Puritan family and acquaintances, and the hostile world at large, undoubtedly contributed, as detailed by Ignatius Donnelly (*ibid.*). She was a brave, wise, highly intelligent, and wholly admirable woman, who deserved better.

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