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A I SHKRUAJTI VËRTET SHEKSPIRI VEPRAT E TIJ?

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Përmbledhje

Në dekadat e fundit ka pasur shumë teori mbi autorësinë e veprave të William Shakespeare. Dyshime janë hedhur mbi autorësinë e vërtetë të veprave si dhe mbi jetën e tij. Të gjitha teoritë që kundërshtojnë origjinalitetin e autorësisë së William Shakespeare nuk janë të shëndosha, as akademike dhe as në përputhje me faktet historike. Në këtë artikull unë paraqes argumentet pse ishte William Shakespeare ai që shkroi me të vërtetë veprat e tij dhe askush tjetër dhe se të gjitha teoritë e tjera janë vetëm spekulime dhe trillime. Ky artikull është shkruar mbi një periudhë të gjatë studimi mbi veprat e Shekspirit, jetën dhe stilin e tij dhe në koherencë me autorët kryesorë për jetën dhe veprat e tij.

Fjalë çelës: *Shekspir, drama, Stratford-upon-Avon, Anonim, Mbreti James, Mbretëresha Elisabeth, Globi.*

DID SHAKESPEARE REALLY WRITE HIS OWN WORKS?

Abstract

There have been many theories in the recent decades on the authorship of the works by William Shakespeare. Doubts have been cast on his authorship as well as on his life. All the theories that oppose the genuinity of the authorship of William Shakespeare are not sound, nor academic, nor in accordance with the historical facts. In this article I present the arguments on why it was William Shakespeare who indeed wrote his plays and noone else and that all other theories are just speculations and fiction. This article is written upon a long period of studying on the works of Shakespeare, his life and style and in coherenwith the paramount authors on his life and works.

Key words: *Shakespeare, plays, Stratford-upon-Avon, Anonymous, King James, Queen Elisabeth, the Globe.*

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Today's society has a huge flaw. It continues to make the greatest universal mistake, considering today's human mind to be the most advanced and intelligent in the history of mankind. We, today, think we know everything and have an answer for everything. We have even become skeptical of the past, casting doubt on almost every historical aspect or prominent figure of humanity over the centuries, considering them as archaic and uncivilized.

The truth is that we, the modern humans, have the same capacity of our brains as people of thousands of years ago. No cell of our brain has evolved since the first human brain. It may even be true that, due to experience, we know more, but we are producing fewer phenomena. We are barren in the birth of genius individuals, and this emptiness leads us to view the past with skepticism and doubt the geniality of the unrepeatable historical or artistic figures, including William Shakespeare, on whom the modern man's era has continuously dared and raised the question: Did Shakespeare really write his works?

Shakespeare's works are magical. So magical and unrepeatable, that for years it has been doubted whether it was anyone else, nobler, more handsome, more prestigious who wrote them, and not a simple uneducated man with no status in the society of that time. It has been hypothesized over the years that the real authors of Shakespeare's works were Lord Francis Bacon, the Count of Essex, Christopher Marlow, the Count of Derby, the Count of Rutland, the Count of Oxford, and even Queen Elizabeth I herself.

In 2011, a Hollywood movie, titled "Anonymous" directed by Roland Emmerich, resurrected the issue by portraying Shakespeare as merely a drunken and deceitful actor, and the Earl of Oxford as the real author of the works we know today under the name of William Shakespeare.

Modern man loves fiction. The age of soap operas is not enough for the simple truth of a genius who makes jealous anyone who is or holds himself/herself to be a writer. There should be no such question as to the authenticity of the authorship of the works, since the evidence that Shakespeare was the one who wrote his works is plentiful. There is no evidence to suggest that anyone else wrote them. No prestigious Elizabethan scholar has accepted an argument against Shakespeare; on the contrary, these hypotheses are regarded by some of the world's most prominent academics as "foolish."

Shakespeare's name as an author of works appears in forty-nine editions of works and poems published between 1598 and 1622, more often than any other playwright or poet of that period. Eleven of his works are cited (and evaluated) in a published book while he was thirty-four years old. He is the author of the first collection (Folio) with the title, Comedies, Stories and Tragedies of Mr. William Shakespeare, published just seven years after his death. The review editors were his fellow actors, who describe Shakespeare as their fellow actor, author, and friend.

Moreover, their preface summarizes four poems, which undoubtedly refer to Shakespeare as the author of those works. One of the poems is by renowned playwright Ben Johnson. Many documents show Shakespeare performing in his works in the courts of Queen Elizabeth and King James, and he was buried, with his wife, daughter, and son-in-law, in the most dignified place in the church of his hometown, Stratford-upon-Avon.

An engraved monument, mentioned in the summary of his works, was placed on the tomb and was visited in the following years by people who wanted to see, as anyone wrote, the resting place of “the mostshrewd poet in the world.” Birth, marriage, death, heraldic and legal documents, plus dozens of quotes during and after his life, tell us more about William Shakespeare than those other important figures of his time.

Then what is left for us to argue? Speculators or lovers of fabrications give arguments that do not represent the exact description of such a great writer, such as: he did not go to college; his name was spelled in several versions and sometimes with an apostrophe; his signatures indicate bad writing; his wife and daughters probably were illiterate; he did not mention any library in his will; there was no ceremony for his death; he never traveled to Italy (the country where most of his works take place); and an early engraving of his monument at Stratford, looks quite different - without a pen in hand - as it does today.

Very few of these can be proven and none of them are convincing and true. Neither Aeschylus, Euripides, nor George Bernard Shaw went to college. If it is difficult to imagine a peasant writing in a language of the courts, it is even harder to imagine a count or queen, writing in the language of the street and taverns, or describing how gloves are made, as we read in *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Henry VII*. Skeptics ask how one can write about Italy without ever visiting it!

But Shakespeare’s knowledge of Italy does not go beyond the knowledge of an intelligent person with information obtained from a simple conversation with sailors or pilgrims during an afternoon chat - and in fact, his descriptions were not very accurate, e.g. Shakespeare writes about someone who could get lost in the flow of water during a trip from Verona to Milan, while in fact there is no waterway.

Many people have unreadable signatures, and in Shakespeare’s day neither spelling nor apostrophe were standardized. Because we do not know of a death ceremony, it does not mean that there was none, and the evidence clearly shows that carving a monument without a pen was one of the many errors of a hastily prepared book. And if Shakespeare had a library, he should have donated it to his son-in-law (a doctor) before dying or giving it to his wife along with home and furniture or perhaps keeping the books in a personal office at the theater in London, The Globe, which was completely burned down three years after his death.

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And who knows for sure if maybe he traveled to Italy and probably studied in college? We know nothing about Shakespeare between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-eight; he could have been anywhere and could have done everything during that period.

But we know he was a theater man. And absolutely a genius. What else should we know? Why should we insist that he had beautiful handwriting? Or did his relatives know how to read and write? Just because we do? But we're not Shakespeare, and Shakespeare doesn't have to be like us.

And there is no evidence that anyone else wrote his works - which explains why there are some and not only a single contender for Shakespeare's "true" mysterious position.

One of the evidences of Shakespeare's skeptics, according to them, is found in the word "honorificabilitudinitatibus," which is found in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. According to them, this word contains a secret: "hi ludiF.Baconisnatituitiorbi" (these works of Francis Bacon are preserved worldwide). This argument is not strong, as the word derives from an early Latin word that Dante Alighieri used several times and its true meaning is "to be able to attain glory." But let us suppose that it is possible that all the evidence available for Shakespeare's truthfulness, all without exception, may be false. If we think this would be possible, it means that Shakespeare could have deceived (or bought) every man in his city, every man in his church, every man in his theater company, every man in the two royal courts, every man in the London theater world, and most of the printing presses and bookshops in England, as well as anyone these people met and talked to. (1)

If this gigantic Shakespeare lie were true, then it would be the greatest mockery in the history of mankind. But the truth is simple: William Shakespeare is the author of his works, and any doubts about it would be speculation.

It is often said that little is known about William Shakespeare's life, but in fact we know more about Shakespeare than other writers of his time. He was born in a small farm town in Stratford-upon-Avon, about one hundred miles north of London, in 1564. His father was named John Shakespeare, who then became the head of Stratford (nowadays equivalent to the mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon) and his mother was Mary Arden. Nothing is known about his elementary education, but it is likely that he attended King Edward VI's school in his native town, because his father's position would enable him to be admitted there.

He married Anne Hathaway in 1582. They had three children: Susanna in 1583 and twins Hamnet and Judith in 1585. A public comment on Shakespeare in 1592 tells us that he had become well-known in London's theatrical circles, as a writer. From then on, Shakespeare became an important writer and actor and part owner of Lord Chamberlain's Men, England's first best theatrical company, which was soon renamed the Queen's Men, under the auspices of Queen Elizabeth I and then the King's Men, under King James. (2)

Shakespeare lived in several areas of London during his career, but his family stayed in Stratford. In 1602, he bought the second largest house in Stratford and retired to Stratford in about 1613. He was buried next to his wife in Trinity Church, under a monument with his portrait.

Seven years after Shakespeare's death, a compilation of his works (the so-called First Folio) was published by two of his former colleagues, thus ensuring the survival of many works that had not been published in his lifetime. These included masterpieces such as Macbeth, Twelfth Night, Taming of the Shrew, Antony and Cleopatra, Julius Caesar and others.

Shakespeare. Only the name fills many pages. He is regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and is the most famous Englishman to have ever lived, the greatest playwright, author of sonnets and the dramatic poet of the most remarkable histories of all these literary forms. Today, Shakespeare has received a divine status in England, where his hometown has become a national shrine. His life has inspired countless biographies, novels and theatrical works and a wonderful film that has won many cinematographic awards (Shakespeare in Love, 1998) and his works are used as the basis of dozens of professional theaters worldwide.

He is the most beloved playwright in the world today, not only in England and America, but also in many other countries, where his works are known through translations. Actor, director, producer, commentator and author, his achievements as a "theater man" have set the standard for any dramatic artist since his time. (3)

However, though Shakespeare shone more than his era, fifty and a half years of English drama during his time would have left deep traces even if he had not existed. A playwright, Christopher Marlow, born in the same year as Shakespeare, (1564), was as fulfilled as Stratford-upon-Avon's writer until the moment of his tragic death in 1593. Ben Johnson, John Webster and John Ford, all writers more or less contemporary with Shakespeare, were well-known authors at the time, and their works have left traces in history. It is often referred to as the "Elizabethan Age", the historical part of the drama in which Shakespeare played the lead. However, this labeling is complicated because it technically refers only to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558 - 1603), and Shakespeare and his contemporaries flourished more under King James I, in the so-called Jacobin era (1603 - 1625). In fact, their fame did not end until the Puritan revolution of 1642, when a law of parliament ordered the closure of all public theaters, thus bringing an abrupt end to the magnificent theatrical traditions of the era. In the Shakespearean era there were at least a dozen theaters, many of which regularly presented works to a large paying audience. These theaters provided a way of life for dozens of professional

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acting companies and dramatic poets. This level of theatrical activity would not be repeated for more than two hundred years in any country in the world, despite the population of London and other European capitals increasing by tens of times.

Shakespeare's works took place in distant lands and times or back in history, such as his wonderful eight-part chronicle of the war between York and Lancaster or across the English coast, in places like Verona, Venice, Cyprus, Rome, Denmark, Navarra, Athens, Egypt, Padua, Sicily, and even Albania, where the Twelfth Night is taking place. (4)

The Renaissance was not the era of neglect and ordinary places within the home backyard; it was the era of exploration, the discovery of America and the first settlements in the New Continent, the age of Copernicus and Galileo - an age of courage, curiosity, adventure and discovery.

Elizabeth I's reign was an important time for the whole world. Nationalism was slowly awakening from the remnants of the Roman Empire, and cultural, political, and economic ties between European countries were strengthening and intersecting. Literature in particular, showed a desire to transcend borders; some works and novels were translated into foreign languages as soon as they were written or displayed. Not only did Shakespeare (and his fellow writers) receive subjects for his works from foreign sources, but he also prepared his own dialogues with foreign phrases that his audience could partially understand.

In fact, Shakespeare's work, Henry V, remains today the only English work to have a whole scene written in a foreign language (French) and thus shows the cosmopolitan taste of the theater of that period.

Shakespeare was the author of 38 works, 154 sonnets and 2 narrative poems. Although the first reference to his theatrical career is ironic (an attack by his rival playwright Robert Greene in 1592 called him "a young raven ... who ... claims to know how to write a verse better than you"), his works attracted much attention. By 1598, his name was appearing in the titles of works (Richard II, Richard III, and the Love's Labours Lost), and one critic, Francis Meres (1565 - 1647), had praised him by writing "Shakespeare's soft and sweet as honey" and as "the most wonderful English writer of tragedy and comedy."

"Muses would speak Shakespeare's refined phrases if they spoke English," Meres wrote. To deny Shakespeare in literature is to deny Einstein in physics. All his works that the world inherits have only his name, William Shakespeare, and no other name. (5)

Coming back to the arrogance of today's society as we boast of technology, electronics, the Internet, spacecrafts, etc., let us not forget that despite new discoveries, we are still unable to know the mysteries of the past. High skyscrapers are being built today, but it is not yet known how the pyramids were built 4000 years ago; stadiums with hundreds of thousands of

seats are being built, but no other Colosseum can be built; we have invented the internet, but we no longer have anyone who is close to the geniuses of the past; we have modern philosophy today, but true philosophers were born 2500 years ago; we listen to all sorts of music, but true musicians like Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, etc., have not been around for hundreds of years; we read books on Kindle or iPad, but Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and many more, are unrepeatable nowadays.

The masterpieces throughout the centuries are the testimony of civilization, and the geniuses are the milestones of development and progress, which do not arise for a time or a period, for a country or a language, but for all mankind that was, is, and will come.

Today's society needs to integrate the world's masterpieces more into its cultural system and not to speculate on their identity. Today's individual who has no knowledge of them or who is not a regular reader of them has significant deficiencies in the human inner world. London 500 years ago, there were more theaters than our "modern" cities, and maybe not everybody has the chance to experience a real drama, but no one can stay away from reading a work and no longer doubt the identity of the author. Anyone who does not know the world of Shakespeare's works has deprived himself or herself of emotions, hope, love, and even life itself. If Shakespeare were to recognize the meek nature of modern man and the void of today's true art, he would probably quote this verse written by his own hand in *King Lear*:

"This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen." (6)

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