

SHAKESPEARE

Why is Shakespeare important?

- He is widely regarded as the greatest playwright in the English language
- He had the largest vocabulary of any writer of English in history, using 37,000+ words in his works
 - ↳ Twice as many as the Cambridge-educated poet/intellectual John Milton
- Shakespeare coined over 1,500 words and phrases
 - ↳ “into thin air” “be-all and end well”, “addiction, alligator, birthplace, cold-blooded, critic, impede, amazement”
- One-twelfth of the words Shakespeare used were put into print for the first time in English.
- He is the first writer to use “its” as a third person possessive

He produced 38 plays, 2 narrative poems, 154 sonnets and also other poems

36 plays exist today (no original manuscripts)

Word count by genre: Tragedies (32.7%), comedies (32.0%), Histories (29.8%) rest poems and sonnets

**"TO BE, OR NOT TO BE:
THAT IS THE QUESTION..."
HAMLET, ACT 3, SCENE 1**

**"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE,
AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN
MERELY PLAYERS.
THEY HAVE THEIR EXITS AND
THEIR ENTRANCES,
AND ONE MAN IN HIS TIME PLAYS
MANY PARTS."
"AS YOU LIKE IT", ACT 2, SCENE 7**

But there is a debate...could he have been a front-man for the real author?

**"HATH NOT A JEW EYES?
HATH NOT A JEW HANDS, ORGANS, DIMENSIONS,
SENSES, AFFECTIONS, PASSIONS;
FED WITH THE SAME FOOD, HURT WITH THE SAME
WEAPONS, SUBJECT TO THE SAME DISEASES, HEAL'D
BY THE SAME MEANS, WARM'D AND COOL'D BY THE
SAME WINTER AND SUMMER AS A CHRISTIAN IS?
IF YOU PRICK US, DO WE NOT BLEED?
IF YOU TICKLE US, DO WE NOT LAUGH?
IF YOU POISON US, DO WE NOT DIE?
AND IF YOU WRONG US, SHALL WE NOT REVENGE?
IF WE ARE LIKE YOU IN THE REST, WE WILL
RESEMBLE YOU IN THAT.
IF A JEW WRONG A CHRISTIAN, WHAT IS HIS
HUMILITY? REVENGE.
IF A CHRISTIAN WRONG A JEW, WHAT SHOULD HIS
SUFFERANCE BE BY CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE? WHY,
REVENGE.
THE VILLAINY YOU TEACH ME, I WILL EXECUTE,
AND IT SHALL GO HARD, BUT I WILL BETTER THE
INSTRUCTION.**

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, ACT 3, SCENE 1

**"THERE IS NOTHING
EITHER GOOD OR BAD,
BUT THINKING MAKES IT
SO"
HAMLET, ACT 2, SCENE 2**

**"SOME ARE BORN GREAT,
SOME ACHIEVE
GREATNESS, AND SOME
HAVE GREATNESS
THRUST UPON THEM"
TWELFTH NIGHT, ACT 2, SCENE 5**

**"PARTING IS SUCH SWEET
SORROW"
ROMEO AND JULIET**

What do we know documented about the historic William Shakespeare?

Shakespeare's parents were John (a glove maker) and Mary. Together they had eight children (lost the two eldest daughters as infants, so William – born 3rd – became the oldest)

- ❖ 1564 born and baptized (exact date of birth is not recorded)
- ❖ 1582 Married Anne Hathaway at age 18. She was 26. The rushed marriage was because she was pregnant.
 - ↳ Shakespeare's life from his 1582 marriage to Anne Hathaway and his emergence as an actor and playwright (ten years later) is shrouded in mystery.
 - ↳ Biographers have made all sort of claims, not of which are rooted in documentation.
- ❖ 1583 Daughter Susanna born
- ❖ 1585 twins Hamnet (son) and Judith (daughter).
 - ↳ They are names after friends who were bakers in the town.
- ❖ 1589 Shakespeare was in London continuously. His reputation as a playwright was firmly entrenched by 1592.
 - ✓ He was a founding member of Lord Chamberlains Men, which later turned into The Kings Men
 - ✓ Evidence is he was an intermittent logger in London, likely splitting time between London and Stratford (a 2-3 day commute)
- ❖ 1596 son dies (age 11)
- ❖ 1601, his father died. Shakespeare inherits land
- ❖ 1616 Shakespeare passes (age 52)



The Chandos Portrait, painted bet. 1600-1610 by John Taylor (only known painting)
No evidence that Shakespeare ever commissioned a portrait during his lifetime.
There is no existing portrait which conclusively shows his appearance

Why are there questions about the authorship?

Shakespeare wrote convincingly of foreign affairs, court life, foreign intrigues, the affairs of kings and courtiers, as well as showing a mastery of science, culture, religions, Italy, classical and European literature and of other specialized fields; **all subjects of which Shakespeare-of-Stratford had no direct first-hand knowledge of.**

There are only six copies of Shakespeare's signature, all of which on property documents where the name may have been written by a lawyer or clerk

The name appears as "Shake-speare" in 15 out of 34 plays and most sonnets published before the First folio appears. But Shakespeare-of-Stratford never hyphenated his name in any legal or commercial documents. No other Elizabethan-era figure spelled their name in such a manner

The previous century had been one of political, religious and economic upheaval. The fundamental aim of Stratford's local elite was to enforce intellectual, political and religious conformity by every possible means.

↳ This appears to be at odds with Shakespeare's ability to emphasize with his characters (Jews, women, foreigners, Moors, etc) and present stories of political friction. Yet he was not shunned or disciplined by the Stratford elite who influenced his community.

Virtually everything we know with certainty about Shakespeare-of-Stratford brings doubt to his authorship

- ↳ His parents were illiterate
- ↳ He grew up in a small town in which lived no more than a handful of educated men
- ↳ His formal schooling ended when he was 13
- ↳ There is no evidence he owned a book.

Suicide is a major theme in 13 of Shakespeare's 38 plays (34%)

Why are there questions about authorship?

↳ Shakespeare's wife and two surviving daughters were illiterate

Of the 75 known contemporary documents in which Shakespeare is named, not one concerns his career as an author.

↳ Most are legal or financial documents which depict him as a cold, greedy and successful local businessman and property developer

Seven years after Shakespeare-of-Stratford's death in 1623, a huge memorial volume appeared, produced by several of his former theatrical associates, which contained nearly all of his plays (many were printed in full for the first time). This "First Folio" does not mention or acknowledge his family in Stratford, although it seems inconceivable that they did not retain some effects left by him which would have proven useful to the First Folio editors.

↳ There is no evidence that anyone of his family or anyone in Stratford owned a copy

For four years prior to and two years following his son's death in 1589 at age 11, Shakespeare was mostly writing comedies.

Shakespeare's Sonnets were published in 1609. The Sonnets opened with the dedication page "our ever-living Poet", which was an epithet which commonly eulogized a deceased poet as having attained immortal literary fame.

↳ Shakespeare-of-Stratford was still alive (died 1616); a Shakespeare authorship suspect (de Vere) died five years earlier.

Shakespeare retired abruptly (after being at the center of the greatest cultural renaissance for 20 years), returning to Stratford.

↳ His death five years later was met with little notice. No poems, ceremonies, or anything
↳ The language of his will makes no mention of personal papers, books, poems, or the 18 plays that remained unpublished at the time of his death.

Why are there questions about authorship?

Shakespeare's younger brother Edmund and nephew William Hart were also London actors, but their kinship to Shakespeare remained uncommented upon during their careers (although Hart did perform for the Kings Men in the 1560s; Edmund died in obscurity at age 27.)

Plays were written and performed much earlier than their public release.

↳ Example: Hamlet was performed for the public first between 1600-1602

↳ But a contemporary of Shakespeare records comments on a play "Hamlets" in 1589, indicating the play dates to long before Shakespeare was a known figure in the performing arts world. (Shakespeare was only aged 25 in 1589)

The gravesite:

- Shakespeare's gravesite does not bear his name, only an inscription (family members buried with him do have their names noted.)
- The inscription: *"Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear, to dig the dust enclosed here. Blessed be the man that spares these stones, And cursed be he that moves my bones."*
- Archaeologists have scanned Shakespeare-of-Stratford's gravesite. The non-invasive scan of his burial place beneath a church shows (1) no coffins (bodies wrapped in sheets instead), (2) no family tomb or vault structure (the graves were shallow at 3' deep)
 - ↳ NOTE; his skull is missing. First reported missing in 1879, in a magazine which claimed it was taken a century earlier (about 1794) when grave ribbing was common.

Commonly cited possible authors

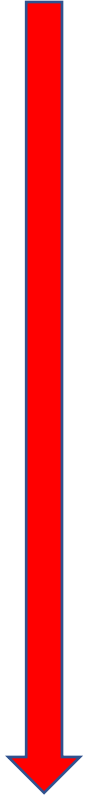


Christopher Marlowe

Already an established dramatist, widely traveled in Italy.
A spy for the Crown.
Died in 1593 at age 29, right before the name Shakespeare started to appear.
Theory (no proof): he survived and went into hiding abroad.
Problem: he was too young when the earliest plays began to circulate.



Edward de Vere
Earl of Oxford



William Stanley
Earl of Derby

The case for Derby rests on two 1599 documents which reference him as a playwright, but there are no other sources.
His father-in-law is Edward de Vere.
Problem: he lived far too long to fit into the real Shakespeare chronology (died 1642)

Also...
Henry Nelville
Sir Francis Bacon

Facts relating to a possible authorship by Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford

1550. born April 12

Age 12, dad dies. He inherits the titles of Earl of Oxford. Ward of Queen

Age 16 he began to study law

Educated at Cambridge University, plus three others.

Raised in the home of William Cecil (Lord Burghley)

↳ Eventually married William's daughter Anne Cecil in 1571

↳ Anne was originally promised to Philip Sidney, but fell in love with Oxford instead.

1572, Oxford fled the English Court after a failed attempt to rescue his cousin (who was executed; Oxford blames his father-in-law for failing to free him)

↳ Soon later Oxford was returned in favor to the Court, likely because he was a favorite of the Queen

1575 he traveled in Italy at the Queens orders.

↳ Upon his return, he separates from Anne, believing her to have been unfaithful. Since three years prior there has been tension between he and wife Anne, as he spent much time at Court flirting with the Queen and other ladies.

1581, Queen Elizabeth sent him to the Tower of London after it was discovered he had impregnated Anne Vavasour (one of the Queen's ladies in waiting)

↳ he was released from the tower once he promised to return to his wife, Anne Cecil.

1588, wife Anne dies at age 31 of fever

1591, Oxford married one of the Queens ladies. Why not Anne Vavasour?

1593, son born

1604, dies of unknown causes.



Facts relating to a possible Oxford authorship

Among Oxford's uncles were Arthur Golding, the translator of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (a major source for Shakespeare quotes), Henry (pioneer of Shakespearean-style sonnets), and Edmund (skilled sonneteer conveying Italian and fashion)

An expense account/receipt dated 1570 proves Oxford bought volumes in Italian and French.

↳ Shakespeare based several plays (inc. Hamlet and Othello) on these exact works which had not yet been translated into English.

Oxford died in June 1604

⇒ Dissent: Shakespeare-of-Stratford continued to write plays
⇒ Support for de Vere: no new play appeared between 1604-1608, and **no contemporary reference in any of Shakespeare's plays can be dated after 1603**

Oxford was known in his lifetime as a successful playwright and poet, although little of his work survives, and the surviving poems in his own name stop soon after the name "Shakespeare" first appeared in print.

Oxford's 1579 Bible exists (held today at the Folger Library in Washington DC)

↳ It contains 1,000 underlined or marked passages and fourth marginal notes in Oxford's own handwriting. More than a quarter of the marked passages turn up as direct references in Shakespeare's plays, and others more subtly.

The First Folio was dedicated to "the incomparable pair of brethren", brothers (1) Phillip Herbert of Pembroke and Montgomery, and older brother (2) William Herbert, the 3rd Earl of Pembroke

↳ In 1595 Oxford negotiated an arranged marriage between his daughter Bridget and William Herbert (it did not happen). William was a patron of Shakespeare

↳ In 1605 Oxford's daughter Susan married Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery.

✚ Historical footnote: at the wedding – six months after de Vere's death – seven Shakespeare plays were performed. A tribute to an absent author/father?

Evidence from the Sonnets

First published in 1609, they were believed written as early as 1590 as schoolmaster commented that Shakespeare “shared Sonnets among his private friends”

- ❖ The 1609 edition of the sonnet include a series of recommendations from a poet, apparently to an aristocrat, to marry and father children. Most historians believe that the addressee was Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton 1573-1624 to whom Shakespeare dedicated some poems in 1594.
 - ↳ No evidence connecting Southampton and Shakespeare-of-Stratford has been found.
 - ↳ However, Oxford tried (unsuccessfully) to arrange a marriage between his daughter Elizabeth and Lord Southampton
 - ↳ Evidence this was written long before 1609: Wriothesley’s first child was born in 1598.
- ❖ Sonnet 10 asks the man addressed to “make thee another self for love of me.”
 - ↳ It is inconceivable in Elizabethan England that an actor son of a butcher (Shakespeare-of-Stratford) would urge an Earl to marry and have children “...for love of me.”
 - ↳ Class differences. Plus, Shakespeare was not homosexual. Oxford was.
- ❖ Many of the Sonnets refer to the poet as “old” and “lame” and as one who had recently suffered shame.
 - ↳ If written in 1592, Shakespeare was 28 (not old!) and there is no evidence he was lame or suffered from shame.
 - ↳ Oxford was old, lame, and experienced shame (accused in 1576 of being a “buggerer of boys” and was banished from Court and sent to the Tower of London for his involvement with Catholics.
- ❖ Sonnet 2 begins “When forty winters shall besiege thy brow”
 - ↳ De Vere was forty years old in 1590

John Bale (the grandfather of Oxford) wrote 14 plays, one of which is the **unpublished** King Johan in 1539, identified as a major source of Shakespeare’s content. How did Shakespeare-of-Stratford get access?

Oxford invested and lost 3000 pounds to a London merchant named Michael Lock, possibly the prototype of “Shylock”, which is a name unknown in Jewish tradition

↳ In Merchant of Venice, Antonio posts bond for 3000 ducats with Shylock

In 1589, in order to raise much-needed funds, Oxford hurriedly sold his London residence, Fisher's Folly, to William Cornwallis who, with his young daughter, Anne, took up residence in the earl's former home.

⇒ In 1852, Shakespeare biographer Halliwell-Phillips discovered Anne Cornwallis's copybook from her days at Fisher's Folly in which she had transcribed verses from Oxford, presumably from manuscripts left behind when the residence changed hands. Interestingly, however, Halliwell-Phillips observed that Anne's copybook included not only then-unpublished poetry by Oxford but also two unpublished sonnets that later would be attributed to Shakespeare.

Researchers have discovered that words frequently credited by the Oxford English Dictionary and other sources as having had their first usage in Shakespeare actually have shown up earlier in Oxford's personal letters.

Oxford was sent on a mission for Queen Elizabeth to several Italian cities.

⇒ Shakespeare's plays set plots in 106 locations Oxford was known to be.

Oxford was once challenged to a fencing dual with preposterous fighting terms, by a person he despised. Such identical terms will be ridiculed in *Romeo and Juliet*

When Oxford was in Venice, he borrowed 500 crowns from a man named Baptista Nigrone. When in Padua, he borrowed more money from a man named Pasquino Spinola.

In Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, Kate's father is described as a man "rich in crowns." Where does this character in Shakespeare's play live? Padua. What is his name? Baptista Minola – a conflation of Baptista Nigrone and Pasquino Spinola.

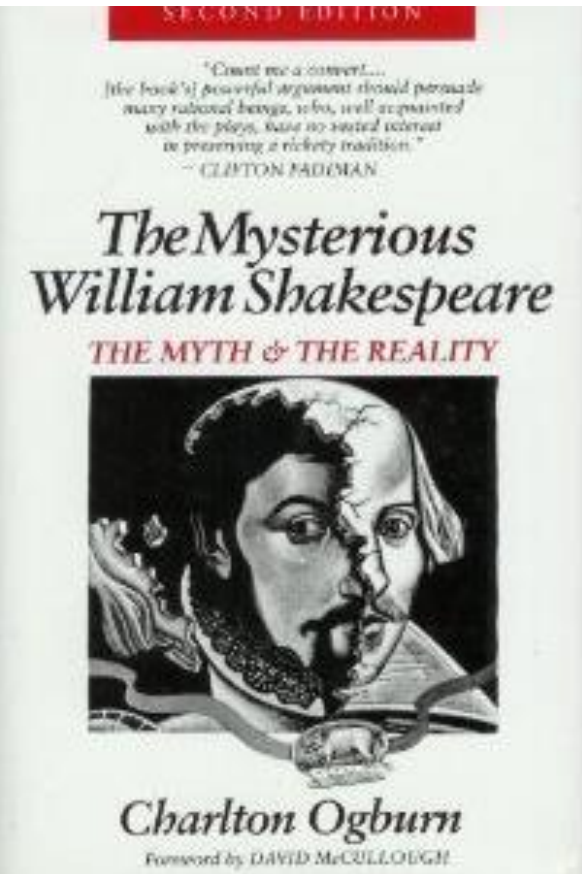
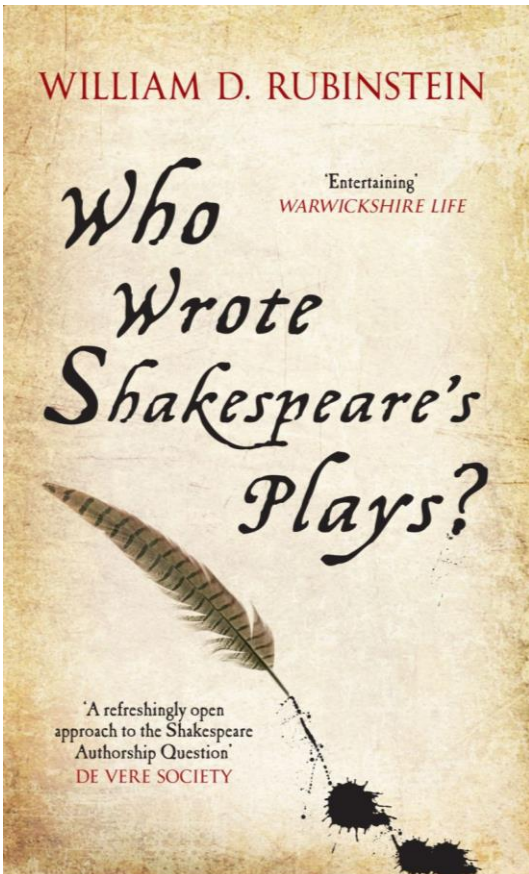
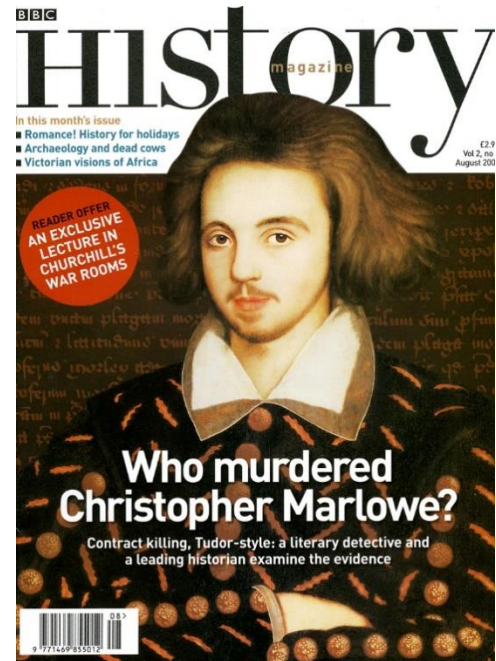
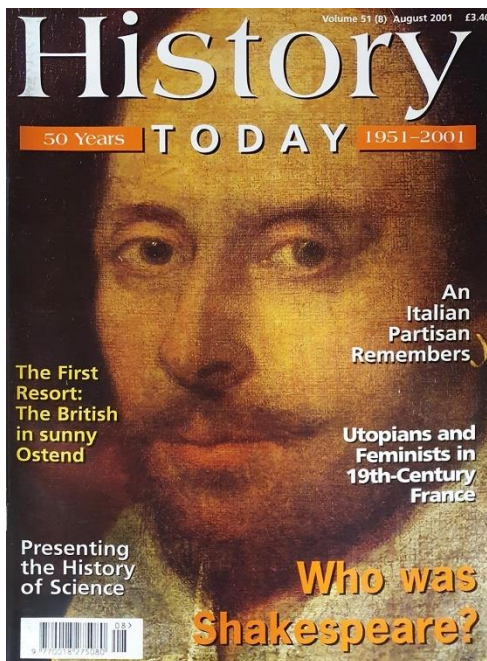
In May 1573, in a letter to William Cecil, two of Oxford's former employees accused three of Oxford's friends of attacking them on "the highway from Gravesend to Rochester."

⇒ In Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Falstaff and three roguish friends of Prince Hal also waylay unwary travelers – on the highway from Gravesend to Rochester.

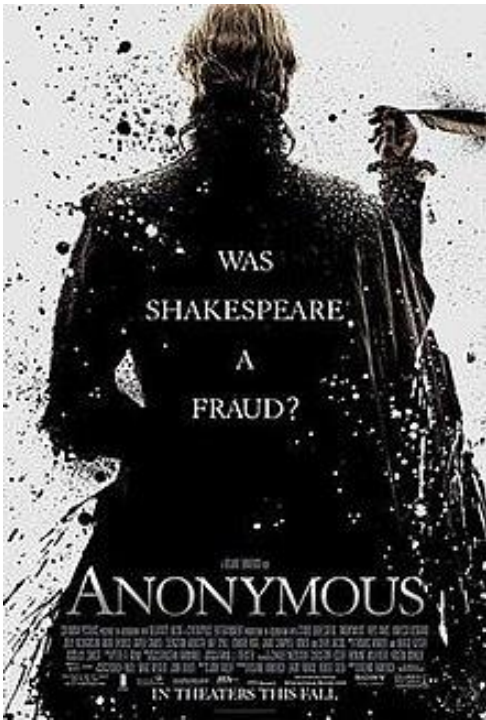
More arguments:

<https://hankwhitemore.com/>

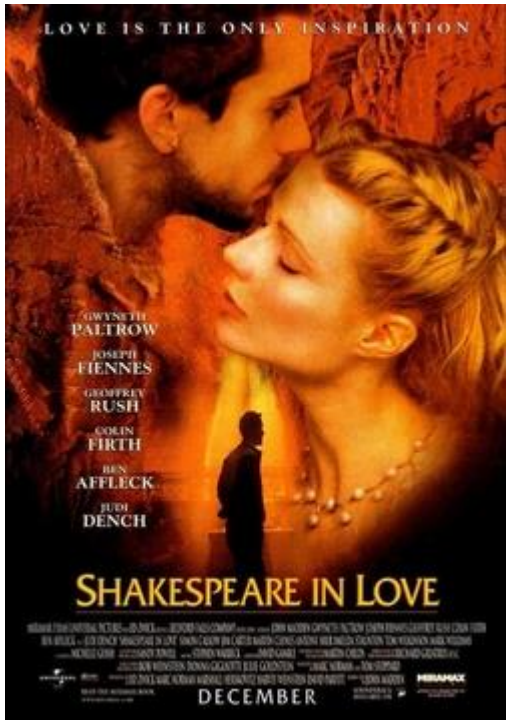
A Shakespeare researcher since 1987



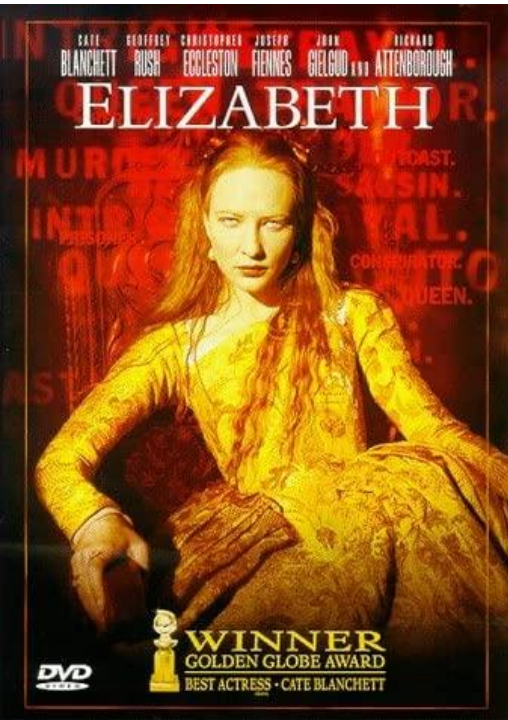
Films placed in or near Shakespeare's era



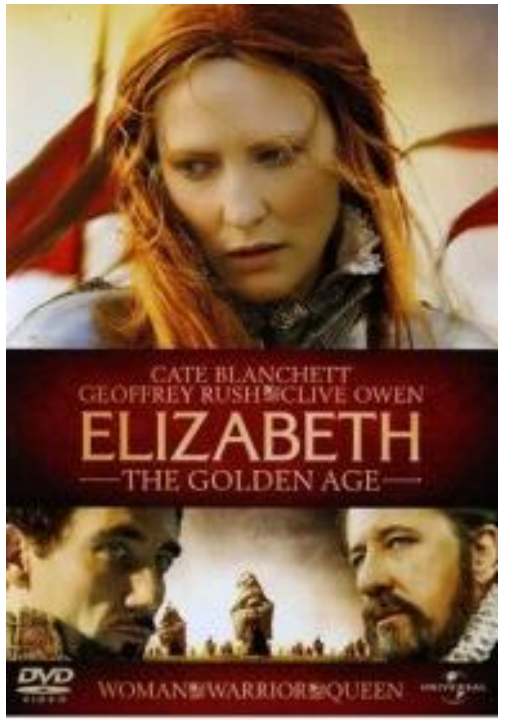
Not well received.
Loosely addresses authorship question
VERY questionable history (some definitely wrong)



romantic comedy



historical drama
solid nonfiction



historical drama
some fictional liberties