

Question 55

What other theories might be compared to the authorship issue and why?

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Shakespeare knew, telling and believing stories is the best, and the worst, way to get at the truth: his plays are full of figures telling stories, and lies; and the most unlikely truth of all; that Banquo's ghost could come to the banquet; is dismissed as a woman's story by a winters fire.

Small wonder, then that the tale of a Stratford glover's son who became the greatest poet/playwright in England, might be misbelieved. The stories that *are* believed always involve dark and sinister forces, hidden truths, stolen documents.

From the death of Diana to the president's complicity in 9/11, the stories of conspiracy always seems more satisfying than the messy complexity of truth. They certainly make for better movies. If we prefer to believe that fair is foul and foul is fair the case for Shakespeare's authorship of his plays will remain a mystery. Alternatively, we can engage with the more removed mysteries of the plays themselves.