



Composite of Sigmund Freud  
and Edward de Vere.

## Shakespeare: The First Psychoanalytic Thinker?

What can a psychoanalytic view of Shakespeare tell us? First, that Shakespeare can teach psychoanalytic therapists—and others—a great deal about people: about our deepest feelings; about our closest relationships; about our struggles to understand ourselves and others. Sigmund Freud loved the works of Shakespeare more than those of any other creative writer, and he learned much about the role that unconscious conflicts play in emotional suffering from his study of Shakespeare. Hamlet said the purpose of theater is “to hold a mirror up to nature.” Perhaps inspired by those words, Freud said the psychoanalyst should, “like a mirror,” show the patient what he or she sees in their clinical material.

One topic has been largely neglected—Freud’s acceptance of a 1920 theory that “Shakespeare” was the pen name of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford (1550-1604). It was easy to dismiss that theory as fanciful, until it was discovered that de Vere’s Geneva Bible shows that his specific interest in Biblical passages mirrors that of “Shakespeare.” My research on that Bible, owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library, has revealed that it was a now little known translation of the Book of Psalms, bound at the end of de Vere’s Bible, that was the literary source for many plays and poems of Shakespeare.

Richard M. Waugaman, M.D. [\(For more on an e-book free until Sunday\)](#)  
Member, Washington Center for Psychoanalysis

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## The Pioneers of Psychoanalysis in South America

December 5, 2014 the Washington Center for Psychoanalysis and the Washington School of Psychiatry present a December 5, 2014 Scientific Meeting and Celebration of a significant book edited by Nydia Lisman Pieczanski and Alberto Pieczanski. Seminal papers many not previously available in English are presented with essays by contemporary scholars providing conceptual and historic context. [\(More information\)](#)