

July 9, 2025

Prechter Replies to an email blast from “Craig Alexander”

Dear Oxfordian colleagues,

On July 6, you all received a strange email. I was not on the list, but a recipient forwarded a copy to me. I have some questions about it, and so should you.

The writer of the email claims to be a University (with a capital U for some reason) student. Yet he does not mention the university. He claims to be doing post-graduate work on the authorship question but does not mention the professor(s) with whom he is working. Most universities would not support research on the authorship question. Many university-affiliated people have a .edu address, but this person is operating from a gmail account. He claims to have only recently become interested in the authorship question, yet for some reason he landed swiftly upon a paper of mine from last year in *The Oxfordian* and singled it out among hundreds of Oxfordian papers and articles, many of which — such as those proposing numerological ciphers, bastard-child theories and Avisa sex scandals — are far more speculative than mine. He says he was *thinking* of joining SOF, but my terrible paper talked him out of it. He uses passive voice to state, “*I was shown* an online group...” which had been launched on Substack just five days earlier, on July 1. Supposedly, then, this student was told to visit the site immediately after its launch, decided it was 100% valid, and penned an email telling a whole host of Oxfordians, whom he has never met, and who have been studying the authorship question more deeply and far longer than he, that they must go read it. He claims to have formed a thoroughly negative opinion about my paper, yet he offers but a single thought of his own. As for the rest, he quotes what are designed to be withering bits from the Substack piece. Most curiously, he says he is *not* a member of the SOF, yet somehow, he possesses personal email addresses for some 30 SOF members and even some DVS members. To top all this off, when you access the Substack article, you find that it is anonymous.

To me, the email smells like a hoax. The writer sounds like an older man pretending to be a young one. But who knows — maybe the writer is a grad student. Perhaps that would explain why the darts leveled at me in the email miss the entire board (see below).

I trust you can perceive irony in observing that the people (person?) involved in this attack pound the table about “academic standards” while egregiously violating those standards by disparaging a fellow Oxfordian in an email blast and posting an online attack anonymously. I think if such people were outed at a university, they would be terminated for misconduct.

Whoever posted the Substack article is obviously a long-time Oxfordian, and whoever sent the email seems to have coordinated it to the timing of the Substack post for maximum impact. I guess this is like one of those 30,000-pound bombs sent down a ventilator shaft: deployed to obliterate.

I have been writing and speaking about Elizabethan authorship for years, covering T.H., Henry Willobie, John Doleta, Arthur Golding, Robert Greene, William Adlington, Richard Lichfield,

George Peele, *Cygnus*, an anonymous play and an anonymous poem. But as soon as I published my book and wrote a piece on Peele, I became the object of a campaign of malice by a couple of SOF members. The paper on Thomas Nashe seems to have sent them into paroxysms of outrage. (I think it's because my articles indirectly challenge their previously published work, not because of trumped-up "academic standards.")

Among the authorial attributions for which I have argued, Thomas Nashe is by far the most problematic due to significant documentary evidence suggesting a life. I concede that point on page one of my chapter on him in *Oxford's Voices*. I am aware that most people on this mailing list probably hold the default position that Thomas Nashe was a real person. My aim here is not to convert you (heaven forbid) but to disabuse you of the thought that any of the email's obsessively biased charges are valid. I have inserted brief replies in red below.

I am a University student who has recently become interested in the authorship question. I am looking to explore ways to study this at a postgraduate level, and part of my research has been studying the Harvey-Nashe quarrel.

However, I wish to register a complaint about the publication in *The Oxfordian* of Robert Prechter's article, "Was "Thomas Nashe" a Pen Name of the Earl of Oxford?"

I was shown an online group chat discussing this, and was struck by one of the comments made, with which I totally agree:

Prechter's article on Nashe published in The Oxfordian failed to meet basic scholarly standards. This is the first example of inflating a charge — in this case, a bogus one — to an absurd level.

One of which is to be aware of and summarise the scholarly work on the subject to date, which he does not do. I have been the lead or co-author of three academic papers on finance. Each paper reviewed literature pertinent to the topic. I am aware of the practice.

Academia recognizes, however, that literature reviews are impossible when a paper presents a completely novel hypothesis. No work (except for Nina Green's post) had ever been conducted on the authorship question with respect to Thomas Nashe, so there was nothing "on the subject" to summarize.

The email writer (being a grad student and all) may not have noticed, but mercifully, *The Oxfordian* does not require authors to bog readers down with tedious literature reviews. It does require that authors reference all pertinent sources. My paper cited 39 sources. The Nashe chapter in *Oxford's Voices* quotes or refers to sources 754 times.

Prechter states that
For instance, "For instance"? The example does not logically follow.

he fails to mention the epitaphs written to Nashe. One was by Ben Jonson – you know, *THE Ben Jonson*, who wrote a moving epitaph in manuscript that was not published **The Thomas Nashe chapter in *Oxford's Voices* of course quotes and comments on Jonson's epitaph. One cannot jam everything into a paper, and in this case one shouldn't, because the epitaph does not tell us a thing about authorship.**

– a weird thing to do for a pseudonym. **Seriously? Ben Jonson — “you know, THE Ben Jonson” — wrote a moving epitaph for another pseudonym of Oxford's, namely *Shakespeare*. I merely propose that he did so for two pen names, not one. (That the undated poem was not printed is irrelevant. Like nearly everything Jonson wrote, it was likely intended for print.)**

Prechter states categorically that

*In *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe*, Richard Lichfield claims that Nashe participated in a Show called *Terminus & non terminus* and dropped out of college as a result. There is no documentary or supporting literary evidence for that claim (189). That was, and remains, a true statement.*

*Yes there is; **Sorry, no.** there is manuscript evidence from fellow student Robert Mills, reminiscing about his student days and alluding to *Terminus & Non Terminus*. If Prechter had consulted even the ODNB on Nashe he would have learnt that. **I erred in thinking the skit never took place, but Mills does not report that Nashe was in the skit. He doesn't mention Nashe at all!***

*He simply isn't aware of the current scholarship. **Another sweeping charge expanded from virtually nothing.***

An Official Summons Produces Nobody

*Thomas Nashe's pamphlet of 1593 caused him serious trouble. “The aldermen of London took umbrage at the insinuations made...” (Hutson 200) in *Christes Teares* and issued a summons dated November 20, 1593: “Item Thomas Nash generosus et Johannes Snowe generosus [to] personally appeare at the next sessions of...Newgate [prison].” Nobody answered the summons.*

*It wasn't a “summons”, it was a recognizance, the legal meaning and context of which are completely different to what Prechter naively believes. **This is a useful distinction, and I am glad to learn it. But it is of no import with respect to the point of the above-quoted observation. Nashe was obligated to “personally appear,” and there is no indication he showed up. (I should have written, “There Is no evidence that anyone answered.”) The point remains: the document fails to establish Nashe's physical presence.***

I could go on and on, and the article does. Please read it.

*For those supporting Prechter's thesis, are you saying that the records of Nashe's life, such as all Cambridge records, *the manuscript poem of his student friend, the manuscript epitaph*, and many others, were ALL FORGED? **First: I never said that. The two manuscript poems have nothing to do with authorship or forgery; I accept them as genuine.***

Second: “ALL” the university records are in fact but a few scraps. They sprung up (at Oxford’s former college, St. John’s) from an utter void with respect to any previous activity by Thomas Nashe.

Third: This email writer sounds *just like a Stratfordian*: “Are you saying that all the records of Shakespeare’s life as a playwright, such as his theater shares, his listings as an actor, his will leaving rings to actors, the preface of the First Folio, and the Stratford monument, were *ALL FORGED*? Preposterous!”

Yes indeed, people were forging records back then, and they relate to a pen name of the Earl of Oxford.

If so, WHAT EVIDENCE DO YOU HAVE? For Prechter has provided none.

The evidence is not forensic but indirect. In the same vein, no one has produced forensic evidence that the listings of William Shakespeare as an actor are fraudulent. Suspecting so is a logical conclusion from vast evidence that “Shakespeare” is a pen name. Evidence that Nashe is a persona led me to a similar conjecture about bits of paper relating to Nashe. I think Oxford’s aim was to leave the impression that Elizabeth’s England was a flourishing garden of artistic writers. Creating evidence of a pen-name’s existence would have been part of that effort. I explained why (in my context) Oxford would have been especially motivated to create a paper trail for Nashe. But I cannot *prove* it. After a hundred years, no one has proved that Oxford is Shakespeare, either.

Prechter’s article would have been sent back by a high school teacher for revision. This is a hilariously snide comment, especially from a student, particularly one whose prime examples of egregiousness have managed to produce an anti-Prechter-thesis score of zero, or one, if you are ungenerous.

There is no way I could get away with this at an undergraduate university level. **Staggering hyperbole.** Yet this was published in a journal? Why was it published in its current form?

The article being referred to is a 150 page rebuttal on Thomas Nashe that was recently released on Substack. Everyone should read it. **A second plug!**

I was considering joining the SOF but have little interest now. **This sounds bogus.** Your “standards” are appalling. **SOF’s standards!**

Yours sincerely,

Craig Alexander

In sum, the email sent to you is mean-spirited, pompous, biased, reckless and inaccurate. Whoever wrote it is a far sloppier thinker than I am.

I will comment on the anonymous and no-less-problematic Substack article anon.

Yours in deepest bond,

The not-anonymous Bob Prechter

P.S. Anyone who has not explored the topic at hand can access introductory articles and videos from buttons placed partway down the home page at oxfordsvoices.com. Comments, including honest critiques and corrections, are always appreciated.

Followup Note to Readers, April 16, 2026

Oh, the drama. One would think I had writt another *Christes Teares*.

It is helpful to have researched hidden authorship for over 25 years. Numerous aspects of the fraudulent “Craig Alexander” email make it crystal-clear who wrote it. One could expand upon the adage about glass houses, but I shall (for now) refrain. The issue of significance is not this person’s identity but the identity of Thomas Nashe. If you want to know it, read the Thomas Nashe chapter of *Oxford’s Voices*.