

A Theory About the True Origins of William Shakespeare and *Hamlet*

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Abstract

The Introduction of the *Klingon Hamlet* suggests a massive, fraudulent rewriting of history as the reason that Terrans believe that a human named William Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* from his imagination in the 1600s in place of the truth that the Klingon Wil'yam Shex'pir wrote *Khamlet* and that the English version is but a translation of the original Klingon. This history-rewriting theory is challenged, and an alternative theory involving time travel is offered, in which Wil'yam Shex'pir travels back in time to become William Shakespeare and to translate his own works into English. This alternative theory is supported by references to *Star Trek* canon and other writings.

Introduction

In the sixth *Star Trek* movie, *The Undiscovered Country*, about the initial moves towards voluntary¹ peace between the Klingon Empire and the United Federation of Planets, the Klingon Chancellor Gorkon was heard² to say [7, 3],

Ah, Captain Spock, you have never experienced Shakespeare until you have read him in the original Klingon.

At the Klingon Language Institute, <http://www.kli.org/>, a team of Klingon language linguists, led by Nick Nicholas and Andrew Strader, has reconstructed the original Klingon language version of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The book, *The Klingon Hamlet* [9] shows the Klingon language version and the more familiar English language version side by side, much the same manner that the original Hebrew text and an English translation are shown side by side in

¹voluntary as opposed to the less than peaceful peace enforced by the Organians [2, 6]

²Apparently, the dialogs in the movie [7] and in the book [3] differ. Since the author is nearly deaf and understands written communication better than verbal communication, the book version is quoted.

presentations of the original Hebrew Bible [5]. Most interesting in this Klingon language version is the original, “taH pagh taHbe’?”, of Hamlet’s famous question, “To be or not to be?”. This sentence is interesting because the Klingon language is said not to have a “to be” verb [10]. A Klingon speaking the Klingon language says the equivalent of “warrior I” instead of “I am a warrior”.³

The Klingon Hamlet is a masterpiece of literary archaeology, having restored the entire *Hamlet* to its original Klingon language version. Nicholas and Strader are to be commended for a job well done. As Nick Nicholas from the Bureau of External Relations on Kronos, the Klingon Home World, observed in the introduction of the book, *Hamlet* is the most Klingon of all the works by Wil’yam Shex’pir. The play “both questions and encapsulates the very essence of being Klingon: the Tragedy of Khamlet, Son of the Emperor of Kronos.” The play deals with Khamlet’s restoring the honor his family by taking revenge on the killer of his father, the head of Khamlet’s family. The internal struggles of Khamlet captures what every Klingon faced with such a killing must do if he or she is to save his or her honor.

Problem with the Reconstruction

The book has one weakness in its account of how it happened that Earth humans, ignorant of Shakespeare’s Klingon origins since the 1600s, came to believe that he was a human playwright living in 17th century, Elizabethan, England. The book’s introduction claims that, “certain individuals resorted to crude forgeries of Shex’pir, claiming him as a conveniently remote mediaeval Terran, a certain Willem Shekispero, and hoping by this falsification of history to discredit the achievements of Klingon culture”. As to how we, in the 21st century, are *deluded* to believe that Skex’pir’s works were written by a 17th century William Shakespeare, the introduction suggests that, “gigabytes of allegedly Industrial Age back-dated so-called Skekisperoian Criticism were fabricated, and the works disseminated as part of a well-organized campaign”.

However, the historical facts are clear. A person named William Shakespeare existed in the 1600s, and he wrote the works commonly attributed to him, including *Hamlet*. This history is supported by dated manuscripts and dated contemporary references as well as a chain of criticisms, citations, and quotations of the works stretching from the 1600s until the present day. The grand scale falsification required for the introduction’s claim to hold seems to this author beyond the capability of even the most capable history rewriter.

Perhaps Nick Nicholas, a human, Terran employee of the Klingon Bureau of External Relations on Kronos, has been fed misinformation in an effort by the Klingon empire to hide embarrassing facts. What could these embarrassing facts be? What is the *real* story of how a 23rd century (by Earth’s reckoning) Klingon named Wil’yam Shex’pir came to be known as the 17th century Englishman named William Shakespeare, the author of *Hamlet* and many other works?

A Different Theory

This paper offers, in the grand tradition of scientific, historical, and forensic investigation, an alternative theory of how the original Klingon language works of the Klingon Wil’yam Shex’pir were translated into 17th century English and came to be known as the works of a 17th century Englishman named William Shakespeare. It is argued that this new theory, although

³Also in Hebrew, one avoids the use of the present indicative forms of “to be”, saying “I warrior” instead of “I am a warrior” because the first person singular form comes dangerously close to being significant parts of God’s name, which is not to be said out loud.

more convoluted and involved than the one offered in *The Klingon Hamlet's* introduction, is more plausible because it fits known facts from *Star Trek* canon and other writings and it does not require belief in massive, perfect history rewriting, which left absolutely no trace of the original history.

To be able to tell the story, it is necessary to define two terms:

1. *Early Kirk*: James T. Kirk during his captaincy of the five-year mission of the U.S.S. *Enterprise*, NCC 1701.
2. *Late Kirk*: James T. Kirk during his admiralty and subsequent demotion to captain, occurring after completion of the five-year mission of the Early Kirk.

As documented in Hambly's *Star Trek: Ishmael* [4], 23rd century Klingons, contemporary with the Early Kirk, are capable of time travel. This book documents one instance of Klingon time travel that was detected by the Federation, by Kirk and company. It is clear that there could be other instances of Klingon time travel that the Federation did not detect at all. Indeed, whenever time travel results in changing history, those who did not travel in time remember only the new history. The original history simply no longer exists. Thus, from the changed instant on, everyone except the time travelers knows and remembers only the new history. Except in the time travelers, there is no memory whatsoever of the old history, because, as a result of the change, the old history never happened. Only the perpetrators of the change are able to remember the old history and observe the differences, as documented in several time-travel episodes, including *Trials and Tribble-ations* [8, 1].

The traditional picture of William Shakespeare handed down by history is shown in Figure 1. How could a Klingon, who normally has a bumpy forehead end up appearing totally human with a smooth forehead? We know from *Star Trek* history of at least two possibilities.

1. Wil'yam Shex'pir could be a descendent of the victims of the aborted attempt to produce super, augmented Klingons documented in the *Star Trek Enterprise* episodes *Affliction* and *Divergence* [12, 11]. Apparently, these augments were created by altering the normal Klingon DNA with DNA taken from embryos of the human augments created in the *Star Trek Enterprise* episode *Augments* by Dr. Arik Soong [13].
2. William Shakespeare's traditional picture in Figure 1 shows someone with an extremely high forehead. This forehead was thought to be the result of male-pattern baldness, such as that suffered by this author. This forehead could easily have resulted from plastic surgery to smoothen the normal Klingon bumpy forehead, which is the source of the epithet, "turtle head" by which some xenophobic Terrans have been heard to refer to Klingons. Indeed, compare Figure 1 with Figure 2, the portrait of Wil'yam Shex'pir painted by the famous Klingon painter, yaHel DawiD, showing Shex'pir's very bumpy forehead. How the face in Figure 1 could be achieved by plastic surgery from the face in Figure 2 is very clear.

We know of at least one Klingon altered in this manner. The Klingon spy known to humans as Arne Darwin, from the episodes *The Trouble with Tribbles* and *Trials and Tribble-ations*, underwent this surgery to be able to pass as a human and infiltrate Star Fleet headquarters.

In either case, there would be considerable shame among Klingons about these human appearing Klingons.

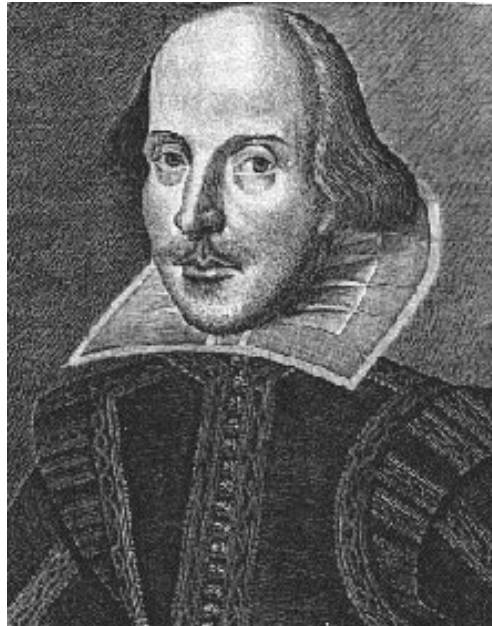


Figure 1: Traditional Picture of William Shakespeare and Theorized Altered Forehead of Wil'yam Shex'pir



Figure 2: yaHel DawiD's Painting of Wil'yam Shex'pir

1. The Klingons who had suffered genetic changes and their descendents would be ashamed

to have suffered a disease that made them look like the disdained and disrespected humans who were thought by Klingons not to be as committed as Klingons to being warriors. Such disdain and disrespect would lead to total antipathy to anything remotely Federation-like, e.g., literature, and retrenching to pure warrior behavior.

2. A surgically altered Klingon spy would suffer the same stigma as genetically altered Klingons of appearing human and because, by appearances, he or she is indistinguishable from a genetically altered Klingon. Moreover, we know that honorable fighting of the kind Klingons do is done face to face with one's opponents knowing exactly whom they are fighting. Undercover operations under disguise would be considered dishonorable.

Thus, in either case, Klingons of a later era, even as early as the late Kirk era, were clearly ashamed of these human-appearing Klingons. Indeed, in *Trials and Tribble-ations*, when Miles O'Brien saw smooth-foreheaded Klingons for the first time and asked his Klingon crewmate, Worf, if they were the result of some kind of genetic engineering, Worf replied with a growl, "We do *not* discuss it with outsiders!"

Consider the high value placed on being a warrior in Klingon society of the Early Kirk years. It is clear that a Klingon such as Wil'yam Shex'pir, with literary talent, with no desire to be a warrior, only writing about being a warrior, and not being a warrior, would have been shunned and ostracized, if not eliminated altogether. It would be only later, during the Later Kirk era, that Klingons would have come to accept and even appreciate Shex'pir and his writing. However, this later period was also one in which the forehead smoothing plastic surgery was clearly no longer performed and by which the genetically altered Klingons had probably died off; one never saw a smooth-foreheaded Klingon in this later period.

The theory offered by this paper suggests that Wil'yam Shex'pir was a contemporary of the Early Kirk. He found Klingon society so inhospitable to his literary talent that he had the plastic surgery, in order to be able to blend into Terran society. He traveled in time to Earth's 17th century. There he brushed up on the English he had learned due to contact with Federation Standard, created and assumed the identity of William Shakespeare, and began translating to English the plays that he had written in the Klingon language.

Why did Shex'pir choose England in the 17th century? England was almost the only place⁴ on Earth in which a variation of the Federation Standard, i.e., English, was spoken, and he would not have to learn a new language entirely from scratch. Literary writing in a language requires deep familiarity with that language. Also, in the 17th century, it was easy enough to come into existence as an adult without anyone caring to or being able to prove that he did not exist before. It was easy enough for him to forge a birth certificate and have it accepted as valid by people who had no real way to validate it. Also, it would be easy enough to get by without a birth certificate; people in those days generally accepted a person's very existence as proof of his or her birth.

Once firmly established as William Shakespeare, Wil'yam Shex'pir began to translate his own works into English and to release them one by one, in a timely fashion, to a wildly approving Elizabethan audience.

Ironically, had Wil'yam Shex'pir waited a few years until the later Kirk years before going

⁴The other places were in the colonies in North America, where people were probably too busy struggling for existence to appreciate good plays.

back in time, he may have found new respect. Witness Chancellor Gorkon's admiration. On the other hand, this respect might have happened only as a result of Shex'pir's having gone back in time to become Shakespeare. That is, Klingons were proud that a man their Terran enemies admired was really a Klingon.

Conclusion

There is no argument that the original version of the works that we know as written by William Shakespeare were written by a Klingon named Wil'yam Shex'pir in the Klingon language. The issue in this paper is how Terrans came to believe that William Shakespeare was a 17th century Englishman who wrote the works, including *Hamlet*, originally in English. The Introduction to *The Klingon Hamlet* claims that this erroneous belief was the result of a massive, fraudulent rewriting of history. This paper has questioned this history-rewriting theory and offers a more plausible theory involving time travel. It has analyzed *Star Trek* canon and other writings and the Klingon psyche to support a theory that the Klingon Wil'yam Shex'pir, the original author of these works in the Klingon language, had himself surgically altered to appear human, traveled back in time to 17th century England, created and assumed the identity of William Shakespeare, translated his own works to English and released them in a timely fashion to become acclaimed as one of the greatest English writers in history.

Acknowledgments

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