Preface:
On Being Wrong.....

"I buy a thousand pound a year! I buy a rope!"
Dromio of Ephesus

The eminent and controversial Oxfordian Charles Beauclerk has asserted, "if you get Shakespeare wrong, you get his plays wrong...if you get Shakespeare wrong, you get the Elizabethan age wrong – its literature, its culture, its politics."[1] I doubt that this sounds as dire to most people as is intended, and I think Beauclerk might have gone further (something I will bet he seldom hears about his assertions). It is clear from his speaking engagements and from panel discussions that Beauclerk does in fact have a keen grasp of the following, but beyond getting back on a realistic track towards understanding what for many is a remote historical period anyway, I would add that if you get Shakespeare wrong, you get literature wrong, and probably you get the very phenomenon of creativity wrong.

This affair of "being wrong" is necessarily weighing on my mind currently, not as much due to my own daily sitcom-like gaffes – or, since they are seldom very comic, maybe sit-trag – but because my university each year selects a recently published general-topic book, a "Common Reading," urged upon all at the school, but especially the new incoming class of first-year students, to serve as a touchstone and to counteract the otherwise inevitable sense of disciplinary fragmentation in the university experience. This year's selection is titled *Being Wrong*, by journalist Kathryn Schulz,[2] and it is not the only recent book addressing the phenomenon of error and the implications of human fallibility, even ultimately setting forth a counterintuitive appreciation for error and wrongness. In any case, the Common Reading committee asked me to present a lecture on "being wrong in the Humanities" near the end of this semester. And I know that the idea is not to rail against Stratfordianism, but geez, what a set-up! Right?

How to appreciate all the accrued wrongness about Shakespeare without validating it, or celebrating it? Really, how not to resolve oneself into a snippy attitude for the better part of an hour (or lifetime), when Schulz gives us "such meet food to feed it"?[3] She notes, for example, "knowledge is conventionally viewed as belief plus a bunch of credentials,"[4] and I need offer no comment on that utterance for readers of this publication, most of whom have had their ideas and work dismissed for lacking the "right" kind of credentials. I posed a temporary threat to the Shakstablishment in this regard, when a cyber-investigation by Stratfordian zealots turned up the facts that I was indeed teaching Shakespeare, a lot of Shakespeare (classes of 75 students most semesters); that this was taking place at a large

university; that I do have a PhD; that I earned my doctorate at the University of Michigan; that my degree is in Early English Literature – dear God! *Dr. Wells? Listen, Stanley, this is the Folger. We've got a problem here! … Hold it. Never mind. We got him. Delahoyde's dissertation was on Chaucer! Ha!* And that eliminates me as someone who could have anything legitimate to say about Shakespeare. What a lot of research, though, in order to prove that I am categorically being wrong, presumably no matter what I say!

Schulz examines the nature of the clash between opposing groups each insisting that it alone is being right, and she expounds upon what is labeled the Ignorance Assumption: "Since we think our own beliefs are based on the facts, we conclude that people who disagree with us just haven't been exposed to the right information"; we operate in ways "premised on the conviction that you can change people's beliefs by educating them on the issues." But, as many of us have come to learn in our encounters with the traditionalists, "Ignorance isn't necessarily a vacuum waiting to be filled; just as often, it is a wall, actively maintained."[5] Such maintenance comes about not simply because "most of us are supremely unmotivated to educate ourselves about beliefs with which we disagree."[6] In at least one vital case, cherished ignorance is more than such an insulating wall; it is literal architecture: Shakespeare's Birthplace, Shakespeare's Theatre, etc. Indeed, ignorance is an entire town – it has taken a village – actively maintained, and on its web site we are invited to "Become part of the Shakespeare story."[7] Unfortunately the only roles available are those of Shrine-Worshipper #43,000,001 and Heretic-Antagonist. The latter is a non-speaking part.

Schulz points out that "The vast majority of our beliefs are really beliefs once removed. Our faith that we are right is faith that someone else is right"[8];"We do not just hold a belief; we hold a membership in a community of believers."[9] She also recognizes "the temptations that can convert a group of like-minded individuals into a community of zealots."[10] Such a community insulates and protects itself inside those actively maintained walls, and of course Oxfordians, Marlovians, Baconians, and so on are just as susceptible to this devolution towards pseudo-religious thinking and behavior as are Latter-Day Stratfordians.

Our willingness to entertain the possibility that we are wrong is further discouraged by a likely apprehension of larger, more destabilizing implications we would prefer not to consider: "our mistakes disturb us in part because they call into question not just our confidence in a single belief, but our confidence in the entire act of believing."[11] If it could be proven that Oxford was definitely not Shakespeare, would I join the Marlovians? More likely, my confidence in my ability to interpret Shakespeare at all having been seriously eroded, I would retreat into the relative safety and innocuousness of Chaucer or popular culture studies and get out of this messy Shakespeare business altogether.

Naturally and obviously I read *Being Wrong* with my Oxfordian eyes, alert for any Shakespearean implications. Schulz is aware of the authorship question but retains a distancing ambiguity about it in her one most direct allusion, noting merely that "You can provoke a deep-seated sense of rightness … by, say, asking a bunch of scholars of Elizabethan literature who really wrote *Hamlet*."[12] Reasonable doubters of the Stratfordian insistence would probably be alert to and feel impelled to cling to this encouragement:

> The more vociferously someone defends a belief, Jung held, the more we can be sure that he is defending it primarily against his own internal doubts, which will someday surge into consciousness and force a polar shift in perspective. According to Jung, this was especially true of the most dogmatic beliefs – which, by rendering all conscious doubt impermissible, must be all the more subconsciously resisted, and thus all the more unstable.[13]

This behavioral phenomenon, which Shakespeare recognized as the "doth protest too much"[14] syndrome, illustrates one good reason why we shy away from potentially being wrong: because as much as we would like to believe in this kind of paradigm-shaking personal crisis and reformation, why are we approaching the Oxfordian centennial and still waiting for the significant shift? When exactly can we expect the mental or emotional collapse of Stanley Wells or Harold Bloom or Jonathan Bate or any of the question deniers?

The inevitable, wider, more exasperated anti-argument usually posed by defenders of the tradition is: what does it matter if we have been wrong? Why does it matter who wrote the plays, since we have the plays themselves to appreciate? When my students ask this, I respond with a rhetorical question: when I give your A to another student who has a similar name while you receive his or her D+, am I going to see you in my office or are you going to let it slide since you can ask, in the end, what does it matter who did the work when what's important is the education you received?

Numerous answers have addressed the question: what, or why, does it matter? Unfortunately, the answers are usually defensive because the question is an intentionally dismissive shrug, which itself is even more lamentable since "why does this matter" is *the* question we ought to be asking perpetually. Every teacher of every class at every school, sooner or later, should feel obliged to be offering a legitimate answer to this question. Is there truly too much class material to "cover," crowding out any room for an authentic exploration of why we are here, learning this, other than earning three credit hours? Or do we just worry about risking exposure of being wrong in having trusted in the intrinsic importance of our specialties and do not want to examine their worth because we are at our core unsure they really do matter after all? Even if it is an unsettling question, "why does it matter" ought to be posed far beyond academia, and indeed for every other facet of our lives: jobs, relationships, how we're spending our time, our very lives themselves.

To return to my initial assertions about the larger implications of "being wrong about Shakespeare" specifically, and why it matters: it matters for the same reason that Hamlet asked, "What is a man, / If his chief good and market of his time / Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more."[15] Anticipating the late-20th/early-21st century, and taking on Macy's and Coca-Cola and whatever two other multinational syndicates own the entire world unto the period of cosmography, Shakespeare shames us, the direct modern-world descendants of the early modern world whose new paradigm pointed the way towards the now-achieved hyper-commodification, into an examination of any selves we have beyond those of consumers, which is all that governments and corporations want us to be – and/or not really "to be."

What *are* we? Writers and thinkers have put forth various metaphors to put some perspective on our humanity. Jane Austen seems to have conceived of us as books or texts, apt to be misread if scanned too carelessly and often in need of more careful rereading. Dickens seems to have thought of us as ambulatory pressure-cookers, letting off steam in bizarre mannerisms and linguistic eccentricities; failure to do so can result in spontaneous combustion, so that a kind of "foetid effluvia" (the greasy particulates in the air after the explosion of the repressed hoarder Mr. Krook) pervades the atmosphere of *Bleak House*, for example. The pop psychology notion that we dare not "bottle up our emotions" but must "talk about them" lest we "explode" is the current incarnation of the foetid effluvia model. Other than Dickens' proto-steam-punk metaphor for the human machine, variously identified energy systems driving human beings have emerged from other authors and thinkers. Vladimir Nabokov, the Russian-born novelist, despised Freudian psychoanalysis and its construction of the human psyche as an intricate and often mischanneled system of sexual energy, so that humor and art and so forth all result from repressed and sublimated sexual

urges. But Nabokov argued through one of his characters, "It is not the artistic aptitudes that are secondary sexual characteristics as some shams and shamans have said; it is the other way around: sex is but the ancilla [subordinate, dependent] of art."[16] Consider how uplifting and liberating this slight perceptual shift is. It may be nothing more than semantics. But if we think of ourselves at the core as artists, that the energy in our systems is artistic energy, then it's the consumers and breeders who have squandered their humanity by mischanneling their sacred energy.

However little we recognize and accept this, we all are artists. We may not be Shakespeares, but who is not in possession of, or possessed by, a subject or activity that inspires a kind of authentic enthusiasm to the edge of mania? What is your art – that which sustains you, which gives you infinite energy so that you find you don't seem to need sleep or food as you normally would? Playing bassoon? Knitting? Relating well with animals? Cooking Thai food? Are you totally into Sherlock Holmes? Or shocking and unnerving your significant other with incredibly clever sexting on bizarre themes? There is probably interest or art that does this for you, as Shakespeare does for me (and several of the other examples above), concerning which you may find yourself caring very little about how ridiculous everyone else thinks your zeal is. In some ways, my obsession with Shakespeare and the authorship question has ruined my life; and I'm not sure I care.

It was a crummy life anyway, and I absolutely love this new one. Therefore, I am willing to go overboard, even more or less disregarding my "Reputation, reputation, reputation,"[17] very willing to let students consider me a Shakespeare geek, because they cannot discount the energy and joy they are seeing in me, and they then wonder what they may be missing if they do not engage themselves in the readings and the class. I do therefore recommend that no one hold back his or her enthusiasm and artistry: fully be whatever kind of loon at least makes everyone else, when they're done rolling their eyes, jealous as hell because they have not yet allowed their own artistry to set them on fire.

At the core of this creative drive is always authentic human experience. The common denominator among the various proponents of alternate "Shake-speare" candidates is an insurmountable dissatisfaction with the Stratford Shakspere due to the absolute disconnect between the life and the art. How much further can "being wrong" go than to urge a reading of the *Sonnets* as abstract exercises? Does anyone knit these days because baby clothes are so difficult to locate for purchase? Could I carry out cheeky avian-themed sexting (there is a bird, the *Phalacrocorax atriceps*, better known as the Imperial Shag!) if I weren't shocking and amusing a real woman who remembers me as a repressed prude? Am I to believe Shakespeare decided one morning that he thought it would be a kick to explore the abstract nature of the dynamics of desire in an ancient world geopolitical context: hence *Antony and Cleopatra*? Getting Shakespeare wrong means we adopt a nonsensical model of creativity, of where art comes from.

I disagree with Benedick that "the world must be peopled."[18] Mission accomplished already. But the world certainly is in increasing need of being humanized. Pursuing the authorship question rehumanizes Shakespeare. It's exhilarating knowing that these works, this art, emerged out of a creative drive fueled by real experience, real pain, real concerns, actual elations – out of someone's real life – instead of out of the blue, out of arbitrary fantasy. And from his own life, not only did he make art of this caliber, but he continues to inspire our inner artists and what's left of our own humanity. Being wrong matters, then, tragically if we settle for the wrong being.

This issue of *Brief Chronicles*, an especially interdisciplinary one this time, includes articles by academics and other professionals, all of whom explore the Shakespeare authorship question and dare to be considered wrong while heading us towards righting many vital wrongs. What is wrong, or at the very least dangerously wrong-minded, in subscribing to the traditional biography of Shakspere as Shakespeare is presented by Michael Dudley in his article "'By Nature Fram'd to Wear a Crown?': Decolonizing the Shakespeare Authorship Question." Assumptions about the "natural" gifts of the English-born genius have historically enabled an imperialistic spread of English culture: a kind of forced cultural leek-eating as transacted between Fluellen and Pistol near the end of *Henry V*, the leek in this case being the presumed English superiority. (Eat your Shakespeare, America, and know that even though *The Lion King* does not represent a realistic savanna, at least Disney imposed the correct, natural, and eternally ideal political system – monarchy (?!) – onto the world of lions, in which the king's subjects, most of whom are on the king's dietary menu, nevertheless bow down to the primogeniture anointing of the new prince by the Archbishop of Baboonery while the heavens open up to shine a divine beam of sociopolitical approval of this applauded oppression.) Dudley explains how the notion of Shakespeare as England's "gift to the world" makes him an Anglocentric icon and robs him of humanity. When we iconoclastically dare to apply to Shakespeare's works a postcolonial analysis –a branch of critical theory emerging in the late 1980s, addressing matters of race, class, gender, and other suppressed cultures,and an approach generally accepted as an illuminating perspective everywhere else in literature and the humanities – we find, conversely and disturbingly to the orthodox worshippers, a political outlook that is aristocratic in its "nature." Promotion of the wrong Shakespeare eviscerates the plays by disallowing our appreciation of them in one sense as sociopolitical critiques.

Several of Shakespeare's sonnets, for various reasons, look "wrong," and *Brief Chronicles* copy editor Alex McNeil scrutinizes these in "Shakespeare's Five 'Outlier' Sonnets." Sonnet 99 is made up of fifteen lines rather than fourteen; Sonnet 126 contains only twelve lines; Sonnet 145 is composed not in iambic pentameter but in tetrameter; and Sonnets 153 and 154 are based on a Greek epigram. The ever-thorough McNeil elucidates all the attendant questions. Are we seeing the final intended versions of these sonnets or unfinished experiments? Is Shakespeare responsible for what we read? Do the all the "wrong" sonnets belong in the collection? Are the parentheses that mark the supposedly "missing" final couplet in the original edition's Sonnet 126 authorial? What has gone wrong – or has anything really? And once we examine these outliers with an Oxfordian perspective, what emerges? McNeil brings forth some of Hank Whittemore's claims regarding the *Sonnets* as marking a time period intrinsic to the Southampton-as-issue issue, and thus displaying explicable structural shifts regarding the end of the sequence of Fair Youth sonnets. Of particular interest to me, and one hopes to readers of my own contribution to this volume, is the reminder of Whittemore's proposal that the new meter of Sonnet 145 (the one with the pitiful Stratfordian gloss: "hate away" = Hathaway) signifies a new speaker, a new voice or persona – that is, "Shake-speare" as ventriloquist, speaking through the Fair Youth, Southampton. And lastly, McNeil makes his final point the one with the greatest implications: if Sonnets 153 and 154 demonstrate a revision process, then Shakespeare has inserted himself and something of his compositional or adaptation method – he has indicated a personal connection to his sources and his resulting works. McNeil rightly condemns not just as wrong but as crazy wrong any Stratfordian notions or suggestions that the works are emerging from abstract imagination as arbitrary skill exercises, rather than from personal experience as cries of the heart.

What about "being wronged"? In his contribution "Betrayal in the Life of Edward de Vere, the Works of Shakespeare, and Sonnet 121," Richard Waugaman applies his valuable background in psychology to consider this theme, weaving indications from and phrasings in the records of the Earl of Oxford's life with the same in the Bard's works, far beyond the oft-cited and defiant "I am that I am" assertion in Oxford's letter to Burghley and echoed in the Shakespeare plays. Waugaman's biographical sketch of an inevitable undermining of Oxford's ability to trust others, especially women, matches the exploration of a near-traumatic sense of betrayal persistent in the Shakespeare works. Those characters wronged or suspecting incorrectly that they have been wronged include Othello, Leontes, Claudio, Troilus, Posthumus, Timon, and Coriolanus; and the same wounded perspective is featured in the *Sonnets*. The sense of betrayal in Shakespeare can reach near biblical intensity, with Julius Caesar's experiences sometimes echoing with Christ associations, for example. Multiple layers of biblical allusions demonstrate an artistic psyche sensitized to the theme. Waugaman reads the susceptibility for a sense of betrayal by women especially – de Vere's and therefore Shakespeare's – partly as stemming from a pathological jealousy, emerging in an identification with others betrayed in history and legend. Interestingly, Waugaman includes not just the victimization perspective in Oxford's creative arsenal but also the experience as betrayer. Later on, Sonnet 121 registers a reaction to betrayal: a tired cynicism, perhaps on its way to leading towards a phase or even resolution of forgiveness. Understanding the emotional complexities of the poet-playwright as he processes, through his artistic medium, the emotional and experiential difficulties of feeling wronged therefore enables us to appreciate much better the density of the Shakespeare works and some of the impetus behind their creation.

In "What Really Happens in *Macbeth*? An Originalist Reading," stalwart Oxfordian Richard Whalen declares as wrong the traditional interpretation of the play as regards Macbeth's supposed tragic flaw: his ostensible ambition. Perplexed, reluctant, and remorseful, better suited for the battlefield than the world of court politics, Macbeth displays more conscience than ambition. Whalen has now spent many years intricately involved with the play, recently having published the second Oxfordian edition of *Macbeth*, and has been applying both microscopic and macroscopic foci. He is therefore amply qualified to help us revise our inherited view: the notion that the play serves as an admonition, particularly to commoners, against regal ambition. Instead, Whalen urges us to see the title character as a much more complex and sympathetic antihero, and to adjust our vision in order to recognize the intended audience as the Elizabethan court and courtiers, the key concern being the succession issue. Whalen has impressed upon me in several conversations, "These are not the plays the Stratfordians would have us believe them to be"; he has delved into how wrong the consensus in Shakespeare studies can be.

Next, if not in royal line, then at least in pagination, is my own article, "Lyric Poetry from Chaucer to Shakespeare," which Paul Altrocchi and Hank Whittemore have already solicited for inclusion in the next volume of their Oxfordian anthology series (Volume 9: "Soul of the Age"). As I mention above, Chaucer was my graduate school specialty, and in teaching early English literature survey courses I have been struck by how clear the complete trajectory is towards "Shakespeare." The impression given by the anthologies of English literature is that the editors have collected the greatest hits and placed them in chronological sequence. But the truth is that there is an intention and self-awareness in Shakespeare, an entire evolution of previous English literature absorbed by Oxford – and only Oxford makes sense as the fruition of this development, what even seems like a teleology. I try to show, as intricately woven together, some assorted, unappreciated Chaucer connections in Shakespeare plays. Oxford's

uncle, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, extends persona poetry as inspired initially by Chaucer. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* and other collections of anonymous Elizabethan poetry show Chaucer connections, Oxford connections, and Shakespeare connections, especially regarding experimentation with "voices" and adoption of personae. English literature develops from Chaucer's innovations with ventriloquism – pilgrims and personae manifesting character and psychology in an early version of the dramatic monologue. Shakespeare takes the next step with poetry, removing the narrator – as "Shakespeare" disappears, so unfortunately does Oxford – who now exists entirely in the voices of his created characters. In Shakespeare, poetry and dramatic literature are no longer mutually exclusive genres.

I am especially gratified to see the work of recent PhD recipient Jacob Hughes following my own. His "Comparative Caricatures in *King John* and *Troublesome Raigne*" tackles what he frames as a "chicken or egg" question, but not only regarding the relationship between the canonical play and the anonymous quarto, but also the initial motivation for Shakespeare resurrecting historical material so far outside his normal predilection for fifteenth-century English history. The most electric character in the play(s), the Bastard, Faulconbridge, is positioned as faithful to his sovereign but ambivalent about his sovereign's motivations. He rails against the hollowness of commodity while the king desperately plays political musical chairs on the continent. Hughes suggests that the motive for revision – from *Troublesome Raigne* to *King John* – may have involved Shakespeare's increased dismay, frustration, and rage at the culture of commodity. One play emphasizes the complication and dangers of foreign influence while the other howls at honor and obligation on an international stage. If we see both bastards on an artistic continuum, their frustrations are compatible, but Shakespeare's Faulconbridge presents a nuanced and articulate expansion on the other's anger. In effect, the bastard has grown up. Shakespeare may have felt that his character could better address some more relevant cultural or political wrongs in revision.

Stuart Nettleton, Senior Lecturer in the School of Systems, Management and Leadership at the University of Technology, Sydney, opens up a conversation to be had about the uses of social networking theory and Bayesian statistics in his contribution to the interdisciplinary dimension of this volume of *Brief Chronicles*, "Bayesian Interrogation of the Elizabethan Social Network for First Folio Authorship." Nettleton's application of social network and statistical analysis to authorship probabilities considers the various "Shakespeare" candidates: for example, in the strength of their connections to the First Folio, and in the intricacy of their interconnections. Marlowe, de Vere, Philip Sidney, Mary Sidney, Dyer, Manners, Shakspere, and Mary Wroth (a niece of Mary Sidney) are considered. Mary Sidney's position at the center of the House of Pembroke renders her a person of great interest here, as do associations between her and Sappho, the ancient Greek female lyricist who brought together a circle of writers as Mary Sidney seems to have done. Nettleton offers responsible disclaimers, acknowledging the potential flaws in the process: early deaths, as of Marlowe and Sidney, reduce the opportunities for their establishing social networks and relationships; we have insufficient information about Shakspere; Oxford's falling out at tennis with Philip Sidney may have severed potential connections with the Pembroke hub. So the tentative outcomes of the analyses may indeed be doubted, but certainly the authorship question is further promoted as a valid one by this investigation.

Another unusual approach to the authorship question comes from Michael Wainwright, whose piece, "The Logical Basis of Oxford's *Troilus and Cressida*," contextualizes both the Chaucerian source and the Shakespeare play in late medieval and Tudor-era intellectual history. The implications of sixteenth-century logician Ramus' expanding on traditional Aristotelian rationalism to make room for observation, experience, and induction

apply to contemporary game theory where issues of advantage, strategy, and deadlock characterize social dilemmas in real-life interactions. As applied to the play, amid a Trojan/Greek deadlock, Wainwright explicates such features as Ulysses' disquisition on degree; the overvaluing of status on the parts of Ajax and Achilles; and the payoffs, strategies, impasse, deadlock, disloyalty, and so forth in Troilus and Cressida's interpersonal dynamic. But as theoretical as such analysis may seem, applying such interpersonal game strategies also sheds light on such biographical matters as Oxford's hope for the Dutch governorship in the 1580s when the "lost" *A History of Agamemnon and Ulysses* was performed at court, the Oxford/Sidney conflict (or deadlock) where Elizabeth's siding with de Vere may have validated his pride and therefore contributed to his downfall, and the linguistic dimension to all this, including Oxford's coining of adjectives that prefigure game-theoretic logic. Ultimately, Wainwright's assertion is that only Oxford could have appreciated Ramist dynamics through the influence of his sixteenth-century university education.

Asking the stylistic question, "Was Shakespeare a Euphuist? Some Ruminations on Oxford, Lyly and Shakespeare," Sky Gilbert sketches the history of Lyly's reception, especially as regards the nineteenth century's association of euphuism with effeminacy, of stylistic ornateness with wantonness. To preserve Shakespeare from such accusations of stylistic excess has come the insistence that he is merely parodying Lyly's euphuistic ornamentation: the many examples of simile, antithesis, balance, etc. But Gilbert, drawing on Ramism, like Wainwright in the previous article, to give some perspective on the historical understanding of the relationship between content and style, contextualizes Shakespeare as a late medievalist with a different understanding of language and representation whereby the traits of euphuism occur not for the arbitrary sake of decorative embellishment but out of the concern for rendering pleasing sounds when works are read aloud or imagined as such. Was the Oxford/Sidney tennis quarrel actually more about poetics? While the Ramist Sidney may have viewed content and style as separate components, Shakespeare/Oxford challenged such binary delineations by appreciating and exploring, bottomlessly, the reverberant music of language and meaning operating in unison.

Doubters of the Stratford doctrine not only dare to be considered wrong but could expect it with absolute certainty if the Stratfordians ever really dared to read us, a research obligation that reviewers of *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* doubt takes place. Book reviewers in this volume, Don Rubin – who renders the contest between *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* and *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* as a prizefight: Stanley Wells and Paul Edmonson, both from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, vs. John Shahan and Alexander Waugh – and Tom Regnier each describe the Stratfordian avoidance techniques (for example, "Shakespeare's" education) and distortions (of Diana Price's work); the low blows in the form of *ad hominem* attacks, mostly on Delia Bacon (who once again somehow renders us all delusional neurotics); the numerous hypocrisies (do the works connect with the life of the author or not?); the desperate re-branding attempt to label anti-Stratfordians "anti-Shakespearians"; and so on, and *so* tiring! Seriously? Strachy again? Stylometrics? Assuming that we all subscribe to an obscure blogger's cryptogrammatical notions? Regnier in particular, perhaps used to the rigors of his legal background, summons the energy and focus to counter the Stratfordians, especially Alan Nelson, point by point, bringing forth a devastating summation of the Stratfordian desperation. Each of the reviews also addresses the question – does it matter? – with a resounding yes and individual explanations.

Hanno Wember reviews "*Aka Shakespeare*" by Peter Sturrock, Emeritus Professor of Applied Physics and Astrophysics at Stanford University. Sturrock has brought probability theory to bear on the authorship question in an unusually accessible mathematics book

for what is likely to be a readership more literary in predisposition. If probability can be calculated or even approximated for isolated literary events, here is more evidence for Oxford as Shakespeare.

Felicia Londre, in the final piece of this volume, reviews "The Oxfordian *Macbeth*," edited by Richard Whalen. She notes, as Whalen asserts in his article for this issue of *Brief Chronicles*, that Macbeth is not guilty of the tragic flaw of ambition; also that the Thane of Ross is not merely a random extra character, and that all the traditional insistences that this play could be in any way honoring King James I are completely nonsensical and utterly wrong.

Shakespeare's own most famous quotation concerning "wrongness" is this: "Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none." You can find this at nearly every intersection and after every few interstices on the Internet: cooed over, inscribed on merchandise, and translated into many languages. But you cannot find it attributed to any play or poem of the bard's. The problem is that Shakespeare's most famous quotation about wrongness is something he never wrote. Spread the word: Shakespeare did not write this!

Nah. That many people can't be wrong. Not about Shakespeare.

— from the Managing Editor, Michael Delahoyde

Endnotes

[1] Charles Beauclerk, *Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom: The True History of Shakespeare and Elizabeth* (New York: Grove Press, 2010), 16.
[2] Kathryn Schulz, *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margins of Error* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010).
[3] *Much Ado About Nothing* 1.1.121. All Shakespeare quotations are from *The Riverside Shakespeare* (2nd ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
[4] Schulz, 71.
[5] Schulz, 107.
[6] Schulz, 149.
[7] Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, "Shakespeare's Birthplace." Web.
[8] Schulz, 141.
[9] Schulz, 143.
[10] Schulz, 158.
[11] Schulz, 156.
[12] Schulz, 16.
[13] Schulz, 287.
[14] *Hamlet* 3.2.230.
[15] *Hamlet* 4.4.33-35.
[16] Vladimir Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), 261.
[17] *Othello* 2.3.262.
[18] *Much Ado About Nothing* 2.3.242.