



AKA Shakespeare: A Scientific Approach to the Authorship Question

Peter A. Sturrock

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[color print version \$64.95] Do you believe that the works of Shakespeare were written by the gentleman from Stratford-upon-Avon? If so, this book can help you decide whether or not your confidence is justified. Do you suspect that the works of Shakespeare were written by somebody else? If so, this book can help you decide whether or not your suspicions are justified. AKA Shakespeare provides a way to review the evidence for yourself and come to your personal conclusion. You will be presented with three candidates for the great playwright and poet whom we know as “Shakespeare.” He was either the gentleman from Stratford-upon-Avon (referred to as “Stratford”), Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford (referred to as “Oxford”), or a vague “somebody else” (possibly Christopher Marlowe, possibly Henry Neville, etc.—whom we refer to as “Ignotus”). You are presented with 25 questions. Concerning education, for instance, you are asked to infer Shakespeare's education level from his writings, and to compare that with the known (or more-or-less known, or speculated) education levels of Stratford, Oxford, and Ignotus. For each question, you are asked to express your opinions numerically. For instance, rather than say “I strongly believe ...,” you may say “I give 10 to 1 odds that ...” You are invited to enter your numbers in the companion website aka-Shakespeare.com. A program named “Prospero” will then process your entries and return your conclusions, expressed as probabilities that Shakespeare was in fact Stratford, Oxford, or Ignotus. To accommodate a mix of information, debate, and speculation, AKA Shakespeare is written as a dialog involving four fictional characters who meet, drink, and talk in interesting locations in Northern California—from Napa Valley down to Big Sur. Beatrice, a professor of English literature, is a staunch Stratfordian. Claudia, a detective-story writer, is a staunch skeptic. Her husband James (a once-successful engineer, now a less successful vintner) identifies the relevant questions. Martin is a scientist who develops and applies the necessary analytical procedures. (To see their portraits and biographies, open up aka-Shakespeare.com.) Beatrice and Claudia express their divergent opinions, which are processed by Prospero, but the purpose of the book is to enable you to review the evidence for yourself and come to your own conclusion. Print book is in color or black and white

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