

mism for a style most students would term *euphuistic*. Either Matus is completely ignorant of the subject on which he presumes to enlighten his readers, or he is too much of a shark for contemporary intellectual fashions to know the difference between what is impossible and what is merely probable.

In anatomizing such liberties with conscientious scholarship, we must not lose sight of the larger dynamics of Matus's operating method: why would anyone devote almost three pages of a short chapter on the Earl of Oxford to "refuting" a non-existent and, in any case, irrelevant claim that he was the author of the Lyly corpus? A metaphor will serve. When a magician wants to pull a rabbit out of his hat, he distracts attention with linguistic patter. Good patter follows the structure of a *periphrasis*—the object is to spend so much time rhapsodizing that one is on the threshold of the promised land, that the audience never notices that they are still standing in the same dull room. *Voilà—a rabbit.*

Of course, it would never do to mention that Ogburn and others have argued convincingly that the historical figure Matus pompously proclaims could not possibly have influenced John Lyly is the historical prototype for Euphuus himself. Such a reality might have some bearing if one were to consider that Oxford exercised some influence over the historical style named after that "fictional" character. Matus's purpose is to amuse and distract long enough to pluck the rabbit of his so-called refutation from the well-lined tophat of the Shakespeare Industry without getting any intelligent, troublesome methodological questions from his audience.

All in all, the fantasy of Stratfordian authorship is a little like the smile on the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland*: first it has nine lives and then, after using all of them up in various blunders over the past two hundred years, we at last get to appreciate the company of a giant grin that just won't disappear.

Shakespeare: Who Was He?

by Richard Whalen. 1994.

Organized into complementary sections which present the traditional and Oxfordian cases for authorship of the Shakespeare canon, *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* has accomplished the difficult task of impartially selecting the most cogent arguments for each side and delivering these with understatement and accuracy. This well-written book has opened the door onto a much misrepresented age that often leaves academics adrift in uncertainties about... well, who wrote Shakespeare. As an introductory text that lays out the essential evidence for the contending and contentious sides, Whalen's book is a much needed anodyne for those who have been exposed to reams of polemical writings that, regrettably, have mostly misinformed or defamed the living and the dead.