Believing in Shakespeare: Studies in Longing. Claire McEachern. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xii + 324 pp. $99.99.

Written in an engaging style, sparkling with astute observations and humorous aperçus, McEachern's book nevertheless lays out a difficult but compelling set of ideas. The first chapter sets up a complicated road map to the premises of her proposal, to which subsequent chapters provide intricate analyses and close readings elaborating those premises. That road map consists of a series of concepts subtending the idea of belief as it may have existed in early modern England. Believing in a play, McEachern proposes, has fundamentally to do with caring—a mode of recognition marked by that longing on our part to intervene in the action of the plot, breaching the fourth wall, willing a character to know what we know. This form of literary believing seems to be especially provoked by Shakespeare's compositional techniques, McEachern claims, accounting for the Bard's lasting popularity. McEachern ultimately credits this new desire for characters to know what we know to Reformation belief.

Why only Shakespeare would be susceptible to Calvinist emphasis on the eventual, climactic self-knowledge of one's status *sub specie aeternitatis* is something McEachern does not explain. But her claim that the audience's relation to a story changes from merely feeling for characters to willing that they know what we know seems to ring true as a distinguishing *je ne sais quoi* that sets Shakespeare's plays apart from his contemporaries or even all pre-Reformation plays. She indexes this heady claim about the shift in emphasis to the imperative to self-knowledge under the new predestinarian model. From this new imperative to know with God (*con-science*), our own ending emerges as a peculiar kind of predestinarian suspense, skeptically seeking evidence and conjecturing for signs of one's election, so that doubt and self-examination gained new valence in the procurement of faith. McEachern connects this with what Francis Bacon called "the mature suspension of judgment" of literary fiction. From "care," to "breaching the fourth wall," to "knowing *with*," to "dramatic irony," to "suspense," to "doubt," McEachern thus lays out in chapter 1 the major concepts subtending her complex understanding of early modern belief, both literary and religious.

The rest of the book elaborates further on these concepts. Chapter 2 delves into Calvin's cultural impact on everyday devotional practice through William Perkins, and on the emerging new skeptical anticipations of scientific induction in Francis Bacon. Chapter 3 grafts the shift from feeling for to feeling with characters in Shakespeare to the shift in tenor of recognition scenes from "pity and terror" to Bacon's "pity and charity." As McEachern puts it, "*catharsis* becomes *caritas*" (96). She also brings in the brilliant example of two Elizabethan versions of the Oedipus story, one Sophoclean, the other Senecan, further analyzing the predestinarian resonances of dramatic irony in the reception of this famous play. In chapter 4, McEachern examines *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Othello* at their most "magnetic"

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(129) moments. McEachern makes the implausible suggestion that the figure of the cuckold, being emblematic of the "epistemic disadvantage" (139) of dramatic irony, is emblematic of all plays. Though the subsequent discussion about cuckolds, horns, Moses, and Actaeon is fascinating in itself, it feels like a digression.

The final three chapters are devoted to close readings of *Richard II*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest*. In chapter 5, the major compositional strategy in plays like *Richard II* or *King John* is to "worry the threshold of an event in a series of false alarms" (198), so that suspense and doubt are heightened. In chapter 6 McEachern asks the question of what knowledge Lear has by virtue of being a king, in a kind of inverse dramatic irony. Chapter 7 looks at the device of gathering scenes where information is exchanged between characters, or conversely, where they are prevented from gathering in order to build informational asymmetries between characters, exacerbating dramatic irony and suspense. One wishes that in all of these close readings, however, that McEachern pursue the compositional techniques that egg on desire for recognition more aggressively.

Many are the times the reader can be grateful for McEachern's recognition of us, as she strives to guide us through the complicated terrain of early modern belief.

Rana Choi, *University of Chicago*
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Phantasmatic Shakespeare: Imagination in the Age of Early Modern Science. Suparna Roychoudhury.
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018. xiv + 230 pp. $45.

Suparna Roychoudhury's *Phantasmatic Shakespeare* begins with Theseus's response to the bewildered lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His meandering meditation on fancy is perhaps unsurprising in a play known for its meddlesome fairies, floral aphrodisiac, and coveted changeling. Teasing out the textures and tensions of this speech, Roychoudhury argues that Theseus's incohesive thoughts on the imagination demonstrate two things: first, that early modern theories of the imagination were elusive and evolving; second, that such theories, though inchoate, were of particular interest to Shakespeare.

This ambitious and beautifully written examination of the image-making mind offers readers a thorough account of how Shakespeare's variegated representations participate in the shifting field of faculty psychology. Roychoudhury joins scholars such as Evelyn Tribble, Mary Thomas Crane, and Carol Thomas Neely in analyzing how early modern literature negotiates the period's often incongruent theories of cognition. Roychoudhury is unique, however, in focusing primarily on the operations of the image-making faculty (rather than its ethical or aesthetic value) and how exactly