word that Spenser wrote "nine comedies" modeled on Ariosto, there is the evidence of *Teares of the Muses,* where, in summoning Thalia, Spenser reveals a Sidnean concern regarding the current state of comedy. She laments that "ugly Barbarisme" and "brutish Ignorance" have "ycrept of late" onto the comic stage, and "with vaine toyes the vulgar entertaine." This possibly alludes to the contemporary quarrels between the comedic followers of Plautus and Terence—though Terence doesn't get noticed either in *Comic Spenser*. The author's discussion of Merlin's mirror as a metaphor for the whole of Spenser's poem might usefully be enhanced with reference to the ancient, well-known concept of comedy as a mirror of life.

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Immateriality and Early Modern English Literature: Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert. James A. Knapp.
Edinburgh Critical Studies in Shakespeare and Philosophy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. xiv + 434 pp. £90.

A few generations ago, James Knapp's new monograph on early modern immateriality may not have registered as an intervention. Surely, immateriality is central to the culture of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, framed by a Protestant Christianity suffused with Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy. The dominance of materialist methodologies in recent literary scholarship, however, has led to a dismissal of immateriality, which Knapp smartly redresses not by pitting immateriality against its foil but by illustrating how immateriality supplements materialism. Such an approach is especially suited to literature from the 1590s to the 1630s because, as Knapp argues in his introduction, this half century constitutes a "messy period of transition" between "an era in which the intertwining of the natural and spiritual worlds was taken for granted" and one where natural and spiritual worlds represented "distinct objects for reflection" (8). To bridge the immaterial and material, Knapp utilizes the methodology of historical phenomenology.

Immateriality and Early Modern English Literature has three sections ("Being," "Believing," "Thinking"), each comprised of three chapters: an introductory chapter expounding the section's core concept, followed by two literature chapters. The one exception is the first chapter, which discusses *Othello* to illustrate the material and immaterial senses of the word *thing*, as used by Emilia to describe Desdemona's handkerchief. In the span of seven lines, *thing* transforms from a material object (the handkerchief itself) into a material-immaterial hybrid (the *no-thing* of Emilia's vagina) before settling into an immaterial entity (Iago's misogynistic idea that men have foolish wives). Readings of the handkerchief are plenteous, but Knapp's is a worthy addition.

In the first section on "Being," Knapp sees philosophical discussions of nothingness and substance finding popular expression in Shakespeare's history plays, both tragic and comic. The titular monarch of *Richard II*, for example, does not typify a modern subjectivity defined by interior substance, as some have argued. Utilizing Nietzsche, Avicenna, and Jean-Luc Marion, Knapp posits Richard's subjectivity as predicated on something immaterial, a "consequence of his confrontation with the impossibility of self-knowledge" (91). Switching to *1 Henry IV*, Knapp offers a stimulating chapter on material and immaterial senses of honor, engaging the work of Paul Ricoeur to do so. Whereas Hotspur strives to materialize immaterial honor and Falstaff concludes that honor is an immaterial symbol of death, Hal's sense of honor is dynamic, balancing its potential as verbal bluster and its actualization on the battlefield.

The second section on "Believing," the book's detour from Shakespeare into devotional poetry, takes up the interaction between the physical and spiritual worlds. Though I question the picture Knapp paints of the Reformation as a middle ground between asceticism and mysticism, his claim that the Holy Spirit was a liminal entity straddling the material-immaterial divide is generative. In a chapter on Donne's *First Anniversary*, Knapp illustrates how the experience of worldly corruption and incoherence leads to a wisdom rooted in immateriality. Knapp's assessment that Donne's poem "is focused not on what an analysis of the world can reveal but on what life can reveal about the world" (211) is spot on, but a discussion of the intersection between essence and accidence in the *Second Anniversary* may help explain how Donne turns experiences of the invisible into a visionary poetics. The chapter on Herbert, meanwhile, argues that *The Temple* shifts from being world centered to word centered, obliterating the material-immaterial distinction in its "thoroughgoing commitment to the expression of the impossible gift of grace" (268). As preacher and poet, Herbert is not so much concerned with convincing audiences of the truth of his scriptural interpretations as he is with providing occasions to receive grace.

Returning to Shakespeare, Knapp concludes his extensive monograph with a final section on "Thinking." (A short coda recaps the thesis and suggests avenues for future research.) The section argues that anxiety over immaterial-material interactivity "served as an engine for poetic innovation concerning the nature of thinking" (296). In a chapter focused mostly on *Much Ado about Nothing*, Knapp takes up the relationship between perception, cognition, and ideation, showing how all of the examples of (mis)recognition in the play "reveal both the fallibility of the senses and the fallibility of reason" (348). With the help of Merleau-Ponty, the final chapter claims that *The Tempest* "repeatedly stages moments in which phenomenal experience is inadequately represented in intelligible terms, foregrounding the difficulty of reconciling mental and embodied experience" (359). As a microcosm of the book, this chapter demonstrates the most impressive aspect of *Immateriality and Early Modern English Literature*: its ability to put literature into conversation with philosophy in a substantive yet succinct manner. Quite like his early modern writers of choice, Knapp provocatively bridges the

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immaterial and material at a time of enormous transformation. Let's hope ours is as intellectually and artistically generative a transformation as that experienced by early modern England.

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Early Shakespeare, 1588–1594. Rory Loughnane and Andrew J. Power, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. xiv + 324 pp. $99.99.

The German philosopher Hermann Ulrici once wrote that Shakespeare's earliest plays are characterized by "a certain youthful awkwardness, harshness, and immoderation" (*Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, trans. L. Dora Schmitz, 2 vols. [1876], 1:222). This is the pervasive, centuries-old attitude—shared by such influential Shakespeareans as Edmund Malone and Samuel Taylor Coleridge—that *Early Shakespeare* seeks to redress. In the opening chapter of this stimulating collection of essays, Rory Loughnane, one of the volume's editors, observes that the term "early Shakespeare" has long operated "as a sort of shorthand for works considered qualitatively inferior to those which are written later"; put another way, "the earlier the work, the lesser the value" (43–44). In resisting this correlation, Loughnane and his coeditor, Andrew J. Power, celebrate the variety of the early portion of the canon, which includes plays as seemingly disparate as *Titus Andronicus* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. In the volume's introduction, they argue that this variety does not represent "the sort of failure of focus often associated with youth," but rather that it marks Shakespeare's "ability to write across genre and form" (7).

Not all of Shakespeare's works receive equal attention, however. When Loughnane and Power edited an essay collection in 2012 entitled *Late Shakespeare*, the volume began with a chapter on each of the plays said to comprise the late canon. Of the ten plays that fall within the temporal boundaries of *Early Shakespeare*, by contrast, some barely register on its radar; at times it feels as though the collection as a whole is more interested in the circumstances surrounding the plays' composition than in their substance. *Early Shakespeare* is in several respects an extension of the *The New Oxford Shakespeare*, which included two major additions to the early Shakespeare canon, *Edward III* and *Arden of Faversham*; the latter receives disproportionate attention in the present volume. These authorship claims continue to be highly controversial, and scholarly consensus has in no way been achieved, yet the essays comprising *Early Shakespeare* mostly take these attributions as fact or provide further evidence to bolster those claims using similar attribution methods.

The volume contains many compelling essays, especially those which fully embrace the complexities of early modern authorial collaboration. Laurie Maguire posits and