always complete fantasy. Serious scholarship should be careful and evidence-based. Kuriyama’s work is exemplary in this regard. Her compilation of the documents related to Marlowe within a single Appendix represents a valuable resource in itself. Students interested in biography should be directed to it first thing. In fact all students of Marlowe should be directed to Kuriyama’s well-balanced and informative biography.

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This book is located at the conjunction of queer studies and historical reconstruction. Michael Keevak aims to elucidate how efforts to discover the “real” Shakespeare, beginning in the late eighteenth century, have been consistently shaped by the sexual attitudes of those who did the discovering, so that the results of such efforts tell us less about Shakespeare’s sexuality than about that of the investigators, especially when they ignore and sometimes actively resist same-sex attraction. Keevak’s subtitle alludes to various efforts at reconstruction, including the forgeries of William Henry Ireland, the authorship controversy, and views about Shakespearean portraiture. In every case, Keevak steps into the midst of well-established critical conversations, often accompanied by daunting bibliographies, and in every case he unhesitatingly tackles the reading and details required to maintain his central argument, judiciously summarizing and evaluating the views of those in various biographical controversies, from Malone to Schoenbaum and from Delia Bacon to Joseph Sobran. The book is a tour de force of thorough and careful analysis in support of a central point.

If the book has problems, then, they arise not from its methodology but from the point itself, as in every argument that begins with the assumption that all we can know about the past is what others have made of it. “The question,” Keevak insists, “is not to determine what [Shakespeare’s] sexuality ‘really was,’ as if to uncover such a fact would in itself be a useful or meaningful piece of information (although, I suppose, in one sense it certainly might be)” (p. 18). The point, rather, is to examine “the contradictory forces of Shakespearean (de)sexualization itself” (p. 19) or, in other words, to lay out how subsequent writers have constructed a Shakespeare in the image of their own sexual mores. But if Shakespeare’s own sexuality is undiscoverable, then how can we know that others have “(de)sexualized” him? Keevak agrees, on the one hand, with queer readings of the sonnets, the narrative poems, the plays, and the Elizabethan theater’s use of boys for women’s parts; and he shows convincingly, as Peter Stallybrass and others have done, that subsequent interpreters have avoided such readings. On the other hand, however, he insists, as we have just seen, that Shakespeare’s own sexuality is not
the point. If it isn’t, then how do we know that non-queer readings “(de)sexualize” their subject?

One possible solution is the one Stephen Booth suggested twenty-five years ago: “William Shakespeare was almost certainly homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. The sonnets provide no evidence on the matter” (quoted p. 137n56). Keevak dismisses this conclusion as a “disappointment,” both because the terms Booth uses are anachronistic (p. 127n16) and because Keevak thinks the sonnets do provide evidence on the matter. But if they do, is this not evidence of Shakespeare’s own sexuality? Is Keevak not, in fact, constructing yet another argument for an “authentic” Shakespeare — an argument that is more inclusive in its sexual attitudes and assumptions and therefore more authentic than those constructed by critics who avoid queer assumptions? At another point Keevak quotes Marjorie Garber on bisexuality as “the radically discontinuous possibility of a sexual ‘identity’ that confounds the very category of identity” (p. 85). But again Keevak demurs: “one is hard-pressed to know how to apply these categories to sixteenth-century figures, or even to twentieth-century biographical daydreams about them” (ibid.). Point taken, but if sixteenth-century sexuality is that opaque, then how can we draw any conclusions about it, including those based on queer readings?

In my understanding of Shakespeare and the sixteenth century, differences in social class were more important than they are to Keevak, and sometimes I think he underestimates those differences in assessing historical sexuality. He begins with an illuminating comparison, for example, between Rowe’s 1709 account of Southampton’s alleged gift to Shakespeare and Pope’s account in 1723–25. Whereas Rowe remarks that Southampton’s gift of £1,000 was “almost equal to that profuse Generosity the present Age has shewn to French Dancers and Italian Eunuchs” (quoted p. 14), Pope’s version is “French Dancers and Italian Singers” (p. 15). This is a striking example of the careful close reading that characterizes Keevak’s whole book, and it beautifully introduces his point about “deseexualization.” But he misses what to my mind is a social slur in both accounts. “Rowe’s comment is meant as unadulterated praise for the bard,” Keevak remarks (p. 14), but surely this is to overlook Rowe’s sneer in comparing Shakespeare, the paid performer, with contemporary paid performers. Early editors’ social bias against actors has been noted by Steven Urkowitz (“The Base Shall to th’ Legitimate: The Growth of an Editorial Tradition,” in The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare’s Two Versions of King Lear, ed. Gary Taylor and Michael Warren [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983], pp. 26–28), and this seems yet another instance of it — in Pope’s comment, as well as Rowe’s — quite apart from Pope’s bowdlerization of Rowe.

Why pay attention to social class? Because it helps, in a small way, to shed light on obscure questions of sixteenth-century sexuality. Shakespeare’s sonnets record more than one man’s intense affection and desire for another; they also record distinct differences in both age and social class between the speaker and his beloved. Moreover, this distinction reappears in the plays: in the relationship between Hal and Falstaff (brilliantly noted as a parallel to the sonnets by William
Empson in *Some Versions of Pastoral* [1935; rpt. London: Hogarth, 1986], pp. 102–10), between old Adam and Orlando in *As You Like It*, between Antonio and Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*, and between Antonio and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*. If the sonnets do reveal something, however obscurely, about Shakespeare, they reveal a difference in class and age between him and his beloved (whoever he was), which needs to be considered as a factor in their relationship (whatever it was). If Southampton is the young man, for example, then it makes a difference that Shakespeare was seeking Southampton’s patronage in the 1590s, when the sonnets seem to have been written, because Shakespeare dedicated both of his narrative poems to Southampton. A man may well declare his love for his hoped-for patron, but the love is hardly disinterested.

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During the decade of the late 1980s to the late 90s, a generation of Canadian students of English literature — Mathew Martin being among the best of them — became captivated by the promise of Theory. Some of these students were not very well trained to do philosophy, of which literary/cultural theory is a subdiscipline. Martin, however, has a genuinely philosophical turn of mind, as well as being a skilled close reader of early modern plays. His brief in *Between Theater and Philosophy* is that sceptical epistemologies (or anti-epistemologies) found a congenial home on the Jacobean stage, and he argues his case persuasively.

The ancient tradition of philosophical scepticism was available to Jonson and Middleton through the works of Diogenes Laertius, Cicero, and Sextus Empiricus, though a likely intermediary is Montaigne’s Pyrrhonism. This strain of thought assumes “the situatedness of the knower, the mediatedness of sensory knowledge, and the ungrounded rhetoricity of argument” (p. 14). Martin’s bold assertion that “[s]kepticism is theater” (p. 16) requires the distinction that “philosophy and theater seek different truths: philosophy finds truth in presence and being, theater in absence and ontological groundlessness” (p. 17). While Martin revels in the groundlessness and exuberant sense of play in the city comedies, he also covers with great care the economic and patriarchal ground on which the plays are built. He writes chapters on four of Jonson’s plays (*Volpone*, *Epicoene*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*) and three of Middleton’s (*Michaelmas Term*, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*). Since Jonson generally gets more ink in the struggle to resist the hegemony of Shakespeare, I will restrict my comments to two of the Middleton chapters.

In the case of *A Trick*, Martin concludes that “[t]he play’s morality [prodigal son] play structure, used by Tudor dramatists to present a moral lesson through the