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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Mathew Martin. *Between Theater and Philosophy: Skepticism in the Major City Comedies of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2001. Pp. 191.

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

contrasting fates of good and bad protagonists, . . . becomes merely a way to organize the presentation of two contrasting secular progressions: Witgood's 'prosocial' integration into an individualistic, competitive, and economically motivated society, and Dampit's 'antisocial' withdrawal through drink and his decline through the material consequences of his alcoholism" (p. 94). But the "merely" is misleading, as he notes, since what Middleton has registered is something like the breakdown of Christian epistemology. Allegory does not work any longer as a mode of representing or understanding the cut-throat competition among Witgood, Lucre, Hoard, Dampit, and all the others. Ironically, their allegorical tag names serve only to flag that inadequacy. Martin's analysis of Middleton's philosophical stance is complemented by his concerns with sharp economic practice in the *Trick* chapter and with what he calls "patriarchal paradoxes" (p. 115) in the *Chaste Maid* chapter. Though there needs no ghost come from the grave to tell us that dads often undercut their own authority, the "second main comic principle" that Martin finds at work in *Chaste Maid*, namely "the paradox that restraint not only opposes but also in various ways generates license" (p. 125), significantly forwards his case for the power of sceptical thought to destabilize communal values. When the much restrained Moll Yellowhammer escapes the watchful eye of her parents through the back door of apparent death and resurrection, it is theatrical performance, not spiritual transcendence that resolves Middleton's elaborate romance plot.

The readings of individual plays in *Between Theater and Philosophy* are sensible and fun to read, at least when the jargon of Theory is held in check. Phrases like "city comedy often dialogizes absolutist ideology" (pp. 83–84) and "to dramatize the improvisational and paradoxical reproduction of patriarchal socio-symbolic structures" (p. 155) will not, I suspect, stand the test of time at all well. Nor do they lend precision to an often insightful first book for serious students of Jacobean drama offered by an already very accomplished scholar. I would venture to predict that Martin's second book will rely less heavily than this one does on the deconstructive and materialist philosophers whose heyday was the mid-80s.

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Eugene R. Cunnar and Jeffrey Johnson, eds. *Discovering and (Re)Covering the Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2001. Pp. viii, 408.

In one of the essays on the neglected lyrics of Joseph Beaumont which round out *Discovering and (Re)Covering the Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric*, Paul Parrish observes, "As we move beyond a 'great poets' approach to literary history to a more inclusive understanding of what it meant to read and write poetry in the seventeenth century, we are obligated . . . to look at the wide range of poets, women and men . . . who are not found in our anthologies, textbooks, or critical studies" (p. 331). This volume admirably serves the purpose of providing for scholars,